

Better not look down...

Leading neurosurgeon
Henry Marsh reflects on
mistakes, mystery and the mind



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Promoting excellence in psychology

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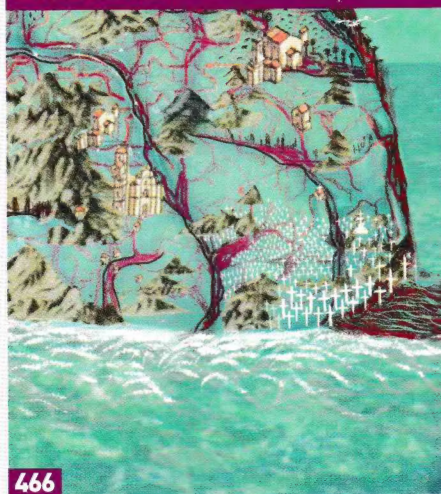
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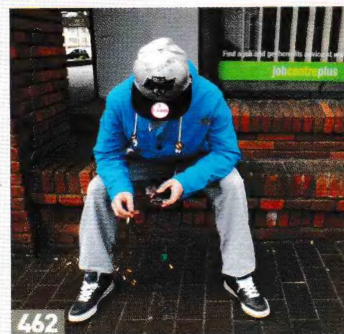
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Three years ago

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for our archive, including a look at psychology in the bathroom



the issue

If I make a mistake in my job, I may feel mortified (see p.503), but nobody dies. Maybe that's why I was so gripped by leading neurosurgeon Henry Marsh's memoir *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery*. Marsh echoes René Leriche's view that every surgeon carries about him 'a cemetery of bitterness and regret, of which he seeks the reason for certain of his failures'. It's a frank, touching, horrifying, funny book, and so I invited Henry to tell us more about how he views the psychology of his mistakes, and how his perspective on the brain has been altered by many years of looking down on the physical stuff of life, hopes and fears mapped out below him.

As ever, there's loads of content in this issue and plenty of exclusives at www.thepsychologist.org.uk. But I would particularly like to draw your attention to an announcement on p.441: *The Psychologist's* first festival appearance, at Latitude! With news of a very special Research Digest live event to follow next month, I'm proud to be looking onwards, upwards and outwards.

Dr Jon Sutton

Managing Editor @psychmag



Big picture

centre-page pull-out

The winning entry in our first ever poetry competition, 'A Wonder World for Enid', from Lynne Cameron, accompanied by her own artwork

Changing behaviour – taking a broader

Leafing through the BPS Annual Report for 2014, my attention was caught by an item on behaviour change from the Society's Behaviour Change Advisory Group (BCAG). The group was set up to advise policy makers on how to get people to change their behaviour. Behaviour is central to psychology – who better to advise policymakers than psychologists?

The article (and the five briefings it refers to) mentions behaviour change at individual, community or societal levels. But the focus of the briefings is almost entirely on individual behaviour. Not only that, social problems and policy implementation are framed in terms of individual behaviour. Only the briefing on energy conservation highlights the potential drawbacks of not taking a broader perspective, referring to the DEFRA report *Carrots, Sticks and Sermons*.

There's little consideration of the possibility that policies themselves might lead to unwanted behaviours: that educational policy might have an adverse effect on school attendance, that transport policy could have resulted in less physical activity, or that financial policies might have reduced tax revenues or encouraged people to borrow. When I was an undergraduate in the 1970s, social scientists were acutely aware of the impact of social, political and economic systems on individual behaviour. So were governments. That awareness appears to have dimmed somewhat.

It's politically expedient for governments to frame social



problems in terms of individual behaviour – doing so conveniently diverts attention from any unintended and unwanted outcomes of policies themselves. The BCAG briefings

Cutting services in prisons

I would like to thank Michelle Lowe and Bob Balfour for their excellent article 'The unheard victims' (February 2015). I have managed a primary care psychological service in a male local prison for eight years and have attempted to promote the needs of men in prison who have been sexually abused. We have been in the fortunate position of being able to offer

a variety of psychological interventions for these men who meet the criteria for complex trauma and not exclude them because they do not meet the criteria for PTSD, because they may have personality disorder diagnoses, or because of their understandable difficulty in trusting others and resorting to coping strategies such as self-harm and the use of illicit

substances as a way of managing their distress. In addition, because they have offended and ended up in prison their disclosures can often be met with even more disbelief than those men who have been sexually abused and who have not offended.

Sadly, our service, like a number of primary psychological services in prisons

contribute

THE PSYCHOLOGIST NEEDS YOU!

Letters

These pages are central to The Psychologist's role as a forum for communication, discussion and controversy among all members of the Society, and we welcome your contributions. Send e-mails marked 'Letter for publication' to psychologist@bps.org.uk; or write to the Leicester office.



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Robert Sternberg, Oklahoma State University

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perspective

need to appear relevant to government, of course. Whether it's helpful for them to adopt a governmental frame of reference is another matter - the briefing on tax compliance even refers to taxpayers as 'customers'. I'm not sure most of us would view our relationship with HMRC in quite that way.

The great strength of psychology is that it can address behaviour at all levels; from the individual to the global. Policy making isn't just about individual behaviour; it's about changing complex systems and needs to be approached as such by everybody involved. I appreciate that the BCAG briefings want to show that there's more to changing individual behaviour than carrots, sticks and sermons, but governments need to be aware that there's more to policy making than nudging, tweaking and persuading. I'd be interested to know what prompted the BCAG's focus on individuals.

Sue Gerrard

Shropshire

Editor's note: We have invited a representative from the Behaviour Change Advisory Group to respond - watch this space.

across the country, is not going to be recommissioned due to cost cutting and the emphasis being placed on providing medical model services in prisons that do not include psychological interventions. I wonder if it is possible for the British Psychological Society to work more directly with commissioners to inform and educate them of the importance of providing psychological services to this group of people. The need for these men to be able to talk about their experiences is crucial and to only offer them medication and a possible diagnosis will not help them in the longer term.

The research looking at the recently well-publicised increase in male suicides indicates the need for men to have the opportunity to talk if they are struggling rather than believe that it is 'unmanly' to do so. The danger is that if clinicians are not being listened to when it comes to the importance of providing these services, these men will be silenced even more.

Dr Kerry Manson

Consultant Clinical Psychologist
Primary Care Psychological Services
HMP Liverpool

Standards in clinical neuropsychology

We write in response to the article 'I felt let down by psychology' by Niamh Lowe (February 2015). We were surprised and disappointed to read of her experiences following a road traffic accident. We are not in a position to comment on her individual case but would stress that the Division of Neuropsychology's previously published competency framework (DoN, 2012) places the patient at the centre of any assessment or intervention. We would expect any neuropsychological assessment to be conducted sensitively and professionally, recognising the significant impact that an acquired brain injury on key areas of functioning including emotional adjustment.

While we accept that there will always be variations in the way clinical neuropsychologists practice, we would not expect that this would lead to a compromise in the standards that have been proposed by the Division of Neuropsychology.

The Division of Neuropsychology is

committed to providing the highest standard of care by ensuring appropriate training and supervision through our programme of training (Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology) and membership of the Specialist Register in Clinical Neuropsychology.

We understand that there is a significant shortfall in the number of trained clinical neuropsychologists working in the field of brain injury rehabilitation, and this may mean individuals do not always receive the level of psychological support they need. We are actively looking at ways that this can be addressed.

Gus A. Baker

Katherine Carpenter

Peter Rankin

Phillip Yates

On behalf of the Executive of the
Division of Neuropsychology

Reference

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Leicester: British Psychological
Society.

A net improvement for student wellbeing?

A mind-boggling one third of students drop out of university (Loveys, 2011). Why? And - importantly - what can we, as psychologists, do to support students on their academic journey so that they can successfully reach their destination?

Onsite student support services exist to fight this battle, yet with limited resources they struggle to cope with high demand. This demand does not even reflect true need. Many students still consider asking for help as a failure in itself, and therefore their needs remain unidentified and thus unmet. Getting help via private routes could be an option, but usually at a cost not affordable for students. Aside from students who face serious drawbacks, a larger proportion of students face mild or moderate difficulties (be it psychological or study skill-related), which keep them from achieving their true academic potential and enjoying the university experience to its fullest (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2011).

So what can we do? How can we, at an affordable cost, meet

the needs of large numbers of students who might be facing difficulties, but do not require formal support or may feel stigmatised by it?

The internet might turn out to be a helpful ally in this undertaking. Web-based psychotherapeutic interventions have been found to be as effective as face-to-face therapy (Barak et al., 2008). Why not take this approach and adapt it to the needs of students in higher education institutions (HEIs)? If all students could have free access (with charges borne by their universities) to web-based programmes that can identify mild to moderate psychological/study-skill difficulties and provide individually tailored support programmes, then HEIs' student support services could use their resources more efficiently. Easy-to-implement, efficient, and cost-effective.

A web-based solution addressing mild to moderate psychological and study-skill needs is being developed as you are reading this letter. A proof-of-concept study with approximately 1000 students has been successfully completed and is ready to be published, and a feasibility study will start in September 2015. Anyone interested in finding out more about our endeavour, or wanting to explore opportunities to become part

of it, is welcome to contact Dr Patapia Tzotzoli (Patapia@iconcipro.com).

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CEO and Founder of iConcipro

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Impacts of the social care market

I would like to draw the attention of readers of *The Psychologist* to a report that has just been published by the Centre for Welfare Reform – *Who cares? The Impact of Ideology, Regulation and Marketisation on the Quality of Life of People with an Intellectual Disability* (www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/by-date/who-cares1.html).

The report argues that there is a risk that the macro-institutionalisation of the 19th century, a notorious episode in our social history, is in the process of being replaced by an equally shaming process of extensive micro-institutionalisation, where people with an intellectual disability are placed in underresourced, inadequately staffed and socially and physically isolated residences in the community.

The content of this report should be of interest to readers of *The Psychologist* because one of the consequences of the marketisation of social care has been the growing marginalisation of professional workers (e.g. educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, social workers, general practitioners) in decision-making processes related to assessment and placement of people with an intellectual disability. Decisions are increasingly being taken by local authority commissioners for services. Thus a process of de-professionalisation is occurring in which the role of those with relevant knowledge, expertise and experience and who are well placed to make informed decisions concerning the individual needs of clients



are being sidelined. These changes appear to be driven by cost and not quality-of-life considerations.

The report makes the point that the propagation of the policy of inclusion within a crusade, as is happening at this time, is both dangerous and counterproductive, for it can foster professional intolerance, division and disaffection; lead to the application of powerful and insidious pressures on professional staff to conform; devalue the worth of those who, for valid professional reasons, find ground for criticism; promote the growth of a propaganda industry which places a low value on objectivity and truth; prompt the use of strategies and techniques that indoctrinate rather than teach; encourage poorly

trained professional staff to believe that the application of a simple formula will resolve the complex problem of delivering effective and humane services; and result in the creation of an inflexible service that is unresponsive and insensitive to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

The report also highlights the fact that in order to tackle the issue of staff costs, an increasing number of care companies are introducing CCTV to monitor residents and staff. It is argued in defence of this practice that it protects both the resident and staff member: acting as a safeguard, preventing abuse and encouraging good practice. However, the report argues that the adoption of such technology runs the risk of reintroducing some of the salient characteristics of the 'total institution' identified by Goffman (1961): (a) individuals progressively losing their identity; (b) constraints being placed on basic liberties (e.g. freedom of movement and action); (c) life within a setting becoming routinised and closely regulated; and (d) staff maintaining a social distance between themselves and residents.

Dr Robin Jackson

Visiting Research Fellow

University of Hertfordshire

Reference

- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. San Francisco: Anchor Books.

Scarred for life

Like most image-conscious teenagers, when it came to choosing an outfit for any special occasion I coveted something both flattering and fashionable. But more pressing was that it would hide the tracks that run from my breastbone to my back where surgeons had fitted pacemakers, throughout my childhood, beneath my ribs to my growing heart. Any outfit also needed a neckline high enough to cover the vertical line marking where my breastbone was opened, aged 12, to mend the hole in my heart, and straps wide enough to hide the messy site, beneath my left collarbone, that has hosted various pacemakers since my early teens. Although I was born with a heart condition, I did not wear the scars that prove it with pride and instead feared they were evidence that I was unforgivably different from my peers.

Yet, earlier this year I was one of eight adults born with a heart condition bearing my scars for a photography exhibition in the Central Hall of Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum. The story of each model's journey navigating the complexity of living with this condition, in our own words, was written on the reverse of our eight-foot high photo banners to give voice to and empower this often hidden population (see www.scarredforlife.org.uk).

Congenital heart disease (CHD)

describes any heart condition present from birth. The most common complex birth defect, which affects 1 in 125 babies, includes a wide variety of conditions varying in severity. Advances in medicine over the last 50 years have ensured that more people with this condition are surviving longer than ever before. In the 1940s, only 20 per cent of infants born with a heart condition survived, whereas today around 90 per cent are now reaching adulthood with an estimated 250,000 adults with CHD in the UK (Warnes et al., 2001). However, many will experience medical, psychological and social problems at some time in their adult lives (Morton, 2014; Verstappen et al., 2006; Wray et al., 2012).

The idea for The Somerville Foundation's exhibition 'Scarred FOR Life' emerged from a conversation I had with two friends, Jenny Kumar and Caroline Wilson, about the need for improved awareness about the heart condition(s) we had each lived with since birth. To this end, it surpassed our hopes with coverage in most national and local newspapers and both the Scottish BBC and STV news and radio.

One of the main aims of the project was to challenge the perception that scars should be hidden away. Fashion and portrait photographer Kirsty Anderson sensitively captured portraits of us displaying our scars as a symbol of

survival. To this end, it has been moving to witness how positively the exhibition has been received with sensitive media coverage and encouraging responses from visitors who were able to speak for themselves by commenting in a visitors' book.

We hope this exhibition has been able to use art informed by psychology to challenge negative perceptions about scars and in doing so help to empower adults born with a heart condition and maybe even have a wider impact on prevailing cultural ideals about body image. As a teenager, I would certainly have benefited from role models to make me feel more comfortable with my scars, and my involvement in this project has liberated me by overwhelmingly changing my relationship with them for the better. I might even wear, for the first time, a strapless top this summer (in the rare hope that the Scottish weather permits!).

Sadly, one of our models, David, died on 25 Feb 2015 following complications with his heart transplant. With his family's permission, David's legacy lives on in his photograph, which remains part of our exhibition, and he was proud to know it was having a positive impact. We can only echo his dad's words: 'He was an inspirational man. His courage, gentleness and much more will always be remembered. Thank you, David, with all our love.'

The exhibition moves to the Forth Valley Royal Hospital in June and then to the Scottish Parliament in October. We are open to any ideas or offers to get our message out there.

You can donate to The Somerville Foundation's Scarred FOR Life campaign by texting SCAR15 £3 / £5 / £10 to 70070 (e.g. SCAR15 £3 or SCAR15 £5).

Liza Morton

The Somerville Foundation

NOT IN THE PINK

The May issue centre spread reporting research into whether painting prisoners' cells pink induces calm and reduces aggression didn't induce calm in me. There are currently 85,590 prisoners in England and Wales, many of whom really should not be incarcerated, including people with mental health problems or substance dependency, juveniles, and women with children. Instead of painting cells pink, psychologists should be lobbying to reduce the rate at which people are placed in a damaging environment that often leads to aggression, self-harm, and even suicide.

Rehabilitation programmes have repeatedly been shown to work better in community settings. The probation service has provided much of this valuable work, yet the last Coalition government privatised a large proportion of the probation service, signing contracts with large multinational commercial organisations. Let's hope the new community rehabilitation companies pay due respect to the evidence of what works for offenders and the need for adequate training for staff delivering services.

So, there seems to me to be a more pressing agenda for psychologists than studying colour charts and worrying about interior decoration.

Mary McMurran PhD

Professor of Personality Disorder Research
Institute of Mental Health
University of Nottingham

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Germanwings crash and the psychology of risk

I'd like to applaud the careful statement made by the BPS on the Germanwings disaster (News, May 2015), but I wish to draw attention to a site of psychological interest that is missing from this account.

When responding to such dreadful incidents as this, I'd like to recommend that more attention be paid to the wider psychology of risk perception with regard to flying and safety. The more recent history of transport safety is predominantly one

of the promotion of fail-safe systems of automation to reduce human error, often as a result of disasters. As Professor De Croo of the European Transport Safety Council stated in 1999: 'When technology became reliable, man proved to be unreliable' (Rumar, 1999).

The BPS could actively endorse the promotion of automatic life-saving systems in aircraft, working towards the state

where it is impossible for the pilot to fly the plane in a way that would crash it, given that the aircraft is still airworthy, so helping to protect against deliberate 'unreliability'. Psychologists could insist that the focus of attention is more towards addressing the potential fear of automatic control in hazardous contexts (in this case, flying, but there are parallels with driverless cars) rather than towards personal mental health interventions, which, the

article admits, will probably not help to avoid a deliberate act of homicide by a pilot.

A psychological focus would need to emphasise two related issues of this endorsement too. Firstly, the heightened perception of personal risk due to flying being identified as a dread risk (Slovic, 2000), a perception that may include issues of the association between automatic control and trust surrounding airlines, cost and safety. Secondly, a focus on attenuating the social amplification of risk (Pidgeon et al., 2003) resulting from a potential association between fear of flying and fear of mental health conditions, an amplification for which the media may be a contributor.

Such an emphasis could help to remind the public that flying is a hazard to be controlled rather than a dread risk to be feared when combined with dispositional attributions of mental health, which include the fear of the depressed, and the perceived madness of the terrorist hijacker. It may also remind psychologists and media that a probable psychological cause of a crash does not necessarily mean that personal psychological interventions would promote the most effective safety outcomes.

Dr Simon Harrison

York

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Male psychology conference

With the suicide rate for men now approaching 80 per cent of all suicides, and men scoring poorly on a whole range of psychological and health indices, there is a pressing need to understand and address the causes of these important problems.

Following the success of an inaugural one-day conference last year, we have expanded this year's event to a full two days on 26–27 June at University College London (UCL). We would welcome your presence to explore with us some of the important

issues that impact the wellbeing of men, and therefore impact the wellbeing of all of us as a society.

Our conference will report on, for example, new initiatives in finding better ways of reaching vulnerable men (e.g. new strategies being adopted by Samaritans). Over the two days there will be a range of presentations on topics in clinical and health psychology, and some poetry and music, giving different ways to help us connect with the male experience (full details at <http://malepsychology.org.uk>).

It may or not surprise you to know that we still only have little more than half the 500 expressions of interest in that

we need to form a Male Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society. If you believe as we do that such a Section is vital if the BPS is to lead the way in pioneering scientific understanding the part of gender that is normally overlooked, then please do take the time to vote at <http://response.questback.com/britishpsychologicalsociety/malepsychsection>

If you care about these issues, we really look forward to seeing you in June.

John Barry

Martin Seager

Luke Sullivan

Organising Committee of the Male Psychology Conference 2015

NOTICEBOARD

Do you check your work e-mails outside your work hours? Or do you switch off? We are looking at **how employees use (or don't use) technologies to perform work during their non-work time**, and invite you to have your say and take part in a 25-minute survey. If you are interested, access the survey under tinyurl.com/Survey-Employee-ICT or e-mail me. Survey ends 14 June 2015.

Svenja Schlachter

s.schlachter@surrey.ac.uk

Turning out to vote

I found the series of articles on the election (May 2015) most interesting. As regards the issue of voter apathy raised in 'Back to the ballot box', I have a few comments to make.

The article points out the high turnout for the Scottish referendum as compared with 21st-century general elections. Whilst agreeing that this could have been due to the former being a very significant, 'big', issue about which people felt they could bring about real change, I feel that the article does not go far enough in distinguishing it from a general election: it was a once-in-a-generation (or so we were told that at the time) and (if it had been 'Yes') almost certainly irreversible decision on an issue that was above party politics or even politics itself and one about which

almost everyone felt strongly (yea or nay).

Another point that was not mentioned and that often seems to be overlooked concerns the voting system: in the referendum every vote counted whereas in general elections with constituencies and first past the post, people who feel that their party has no chance and are unwilling to vote tactically may well feel that there is no point in turning out.

Whilst wondering if voters being 'opinion polled out' might be a turn-off, the article does not raise the possibility that polls may put people off voting, not because of the turn-off factor, but because of the apparent pointlessness of voting for a party that is way down in the polls. Polls could, therefore, become self-fulfilling prophecies. Is there any research on this?

Another article, 'The psychology of voting, digested', reports on the influence of polling stations but does not mention the effect of voting in dismal village halls and places like the one shown in 'Back to the ballot box'. If one were in two minds about voting, the lack of allure of some polling stations would be enough to clinch it on a wet evening. Surely the time has come for an online voting system.

Finally, and on a positive note, the high referendum turnout does seem to have carried over to the general election in Scotland where a 71 per cent turnout (up from 64 per cent in 2010) compares favourably with 66 per cent for England and UK (much the same as in 2010).

Alverie Weighill

New Abbey, Dumfries

obituary

Professor Terence Lee MA, PhD (Cantab), FBPSS (1924–2015)

Terence (Terry) Lee was not the first psychologist to see the importance of taking psychology out of the laboratory and putting it into the service of society, but he was arguably the first in the UK to see the potential application of psychology to the problems of urban planning and the environment. Internationally, he was one of the first researchers to formulate a theoretical research-based analysis of how people make sense of their physical environment – a contribution and foresight which profoundly influenced the development of environmental psychology, and the lives of many who have worked in this field.

After service in the Fleet Air Arm during the Second World War, and a bachelor's degree in Moral Sciences (Experimental Psychology, 1949) at Magdalene College, Cambridge, Terry started his doctorate under the supervision of Sir Frederick Bartlett. Bartlett had been approached by the Labour government to undertake research to support its radical social policies. In contrast to the uniform and soulless ribbon development of the 1930s, the government wanted to build 'Neighbourhood Units' and 'New Towns'. Bartlett asked his young doctoral student to 'put down some ideas' – ideas which led to a PhD that forged a relationship between social and cognitive psychology. For Terry, socio-spatial schemata, or conceptual maps, not only provided an insight into people's inner representations of space and place, but these in turn provided templates for the design of urban spaces. His work was about as far from the orthodoxy of early 1950s Cambridge psychology research as one could get, dominated at the time by the 'psychology as natural science' paradigm.

Terry met and married Daphne Wallace in 1950 and, in 1953, shortly before completing his PhD, moved to the University of Exeter where he worked as a Research Fellow, examining the social-psychological consequences of changing methods of rural education in Devon. Three years later, they moved to Scotland, where Terry was appointed lecturer in psychology at St Andrews (1956–65), and then senior lecturer at Dundee (1965–71). In 1971 they returned south when Terry became the first Professor and the Head of Department of Psychology at the relatively new University of Surrey.

During his 16 years at Surrey he made a number of crucial appointments, including Lionel Hayward, Harry McGurk and Glynis Breakwell. He also established Surrey as one of the pre-eminent international research centres for environmental psychology. On 'retiring' from Surrey, Terry returned to St Andrews as an Honorary Professor, and established the Environmental Psychology and Policy Research Unit, a small research centre that attracted funding from industry and government.

He was appointed a member of the Royal Society Committee on Problems of the Environment, the Royal Society Study Group on Risk Assessment, and a member of the National Radiological Protection Board. He was also a consultant advising both UNESCO and the IAEA on the social and psychological consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. But Terry would have been the first to argue that it is not always prudent to look for the direct and immediate application of research results. As he said, 'Research results make people think – they are not sufficiently trusted by our sponsors to make them dash out to apply solutions.' Terry believed that the impact of the early research in environmental psychology was to create an appetite for more research. And so perhaps his lasting legacy was that he situated psychology in general and environmental psychology in particular into government thinking about people–environment relationships, whether it was urban neighbourhoods, education or risk communication and the nuclear industry.

Anyone meeting Terry would be immediately taken with his charm, humour, urbanity and generosity of spirit. He was always fun to be with and had a disarming way of reining in colleagues' excesses. There are many psychologists practising today who owe much to Terry Lee for his warm guidance and encouragement.

Terry died on 12 February 2015 and is survived by two daughters, Annabelle and Stephanie, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His wife, Daphne, pre-deceased him in 2002.

Professor David Uzzell

University of Surrey

Focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Mastering the Basics

Presenters: Kirk Strösaal Ph.D & Patricia Robinson, PhD

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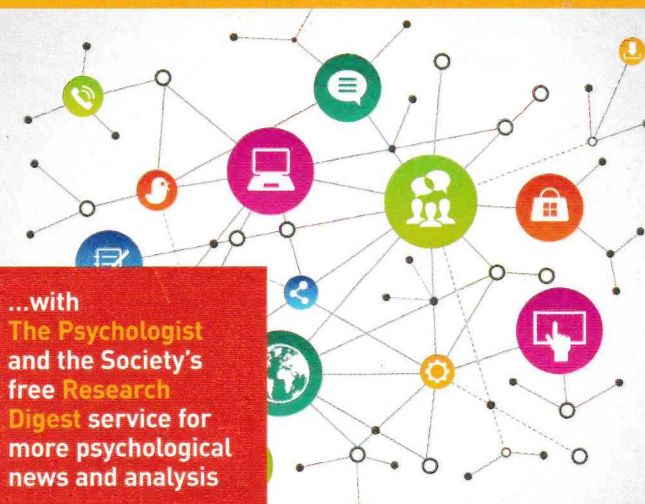
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New disclosures – on psychologists and

A new report has made claims that the American Psychological Association (APA) worked secretly with government officials during the Bush era to create an ethical justification of the torture programme used on prisoners in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The authors analysed around 600 newly disclosed e-mails that show this occurred after increased media attention on interrogation techniques after the revelation of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The report (tinyurl.com/plvxwv2), written by six health professionals, including two psychologists, and human rights activists, makes the conclusion: 'The APA secretly coordinated with officials from the CIA, White House, and the Department of Defense to create an APA ethics policy on national security interrogations that comported with thenclassified legal guidance authorizing the CIA torture program.'

Writing in the *New York Times* (tinyurl.com/mqjh6aa) author James Risen said: 'The involvement of health professionals in the Bush-era interrogation program was significant because it enabled the Justice Department to argue

in secret opinions that the program was legal and did not constitute torture, since the interrogations were being monitored by health professionals to make sure they were safe.'

He added that the Bush administration had relied heavily on psychologists, over psychiatrists or other health professionals, in monitoring interrogations. '[This was] at least in part because the psychological association was supportive of the involvement of psychologists in interrogations, a senior Pentagon official explained publicly in 2006,' he said.

Blogger and psychologist Vaughan Bell, writing at www.mindhacks.com, noted the presence of several top psychologists in the e-mails, including Paul Ekman and Martin Seligman. 'To be clear, I am not suggesting that Ekman and Seligman were directly involved in CIA interrogations or torture,' Bell writes. 'Seligman has gone as far as directly denying it on record. But there is something else interesting which links Ekman, Seligman and Mitchell: lucrative multi-million dollar US Government contracts for security programmes based on little evidence that turned out to be next to useless....Applying psychology to improve airport security screening, soldiers' well-being and interrogation are all reasonable aims. But rather than reviewing the evidence to see what's possible and contracting relevant specialists to develop and evaluate programmes where possible, they seem to have contracted supporters of the "war on terror" for work that

acted with the...
...of the War on Terror...
...Dr. Michael Velazquez, then APA President...
...to Psychologists for an Ethical APA...
...You won't get any feedback from [Dr. James Mitchell or Dr. Bruce Jessen]. They...
...are doing special things to special people in special places, and generally are not...
...available...
...Dr. Kirk Hubbard, then CIA Senior Behavioral Scientist, in an August 6, 2003...
...email to Dr. Geoffrey Mumford, then APA Director of Science Policy...
...explaining Mitchell's and Jessen's lack of response after an APAC...
...conference where interrogation techniques were discussed with Mitchell...
...Jessen and other CIA operational psychologists...
...I thought you and many of those copied here would be interested to know that I...
...grabbed the ball by the horns and released this [Psychological Ethics and Nano...
...Security] Task Force Report today... I also wanted to semi-publicly acknowledge...
...your personal contribution... in getting this effort off the ground over a year ago...
...were well represented by very carefully selected Task Force members...
...in a July 5, 2003 email to Dr. Kirk Hubbard and all...
...community. Hubbard, who publicly...
...CIA, was by then work-

WELLCOME BOOK PRIZE

A tale of a family's journey through terminal illness has won the Wellcome Book Prize. Artist Marion Coutts' memoir, *The Iceberg*, describes the 18 months leading up to the death of her husband, art critic Tom Lubbock, after he was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Chair of Judges Bill Bryson said in a statement: 'From an extremely strong shortlist of books that blend exquisite writing with scientific rigour and personal experience, *The Iceberg* stood out. Marion Coutts' account of living with her husband's illness and death is wise, moving and beautifully constructed. Reading it, you have the sense of something truly unique being brought into the world – it stays with you a long time after.'

Marion Coutts is an artist and writer and wrote the introduction to Tom Lubbock's memoir *Until Further Notice, I am Alive*, published in 2012. She is a Lecturer in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College and lives in London with her son. Worth £30,000, the prize celebrates the best new books, fiction and non-fiction, that engage with aspects of medicine, health or illness.

Director of Culture and Society at the Wellcome Trust, Simon Chaplin, said he was delighted that Coutts had taken the prize. He added: '*The Iceberg* shines a burning light on the devastating impact of illness and loss on those who surround and support someone in decline, while simultaneously celebrating the powerful bonds of family and love. It is tremendously difficult to read, but impossible not to become absorbed.'

Bill Bryson was joined on the judging panel by psychologist Professor Uta Frith (University College London), bestselling author Mark Haddon, BBC presenter Razia Iqbal, and barrister and broadcaster Baroness Helena Kennedy QC.

Another book shortlisted for the prize was *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery* by Henry Marsh. See p.466 for his piece giving a neurosurgeon's perspective on the brain and psychology. ER



torture

lacked an applied evidence base. The outcome has been expensive and ineffectual.'

In February, we reported on the allegations made by James Risen in his book *Pay Any Price* that senior APA staff had colluded with psychologists from the CIA. The association initiated an independent investigation into the alleged complicity between the APA and the Bush administration (<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-28/february-2015/no-torture-without-psychologists>). In a renewed statement (tinyurl.com/mdw6qud) the APA said that 'A third party, independent review of the allegations in today's *New York Times* article and the Soldz et. al. report is being conducted by outside attorney David Hoffman.... Our focus and priority are ensuring the complete independence of Mr. Hoffman's work. For that reason we are not commenting on any allegations about APA support for the CIA torture program at this time.' ER

Address problems early on – HCPC

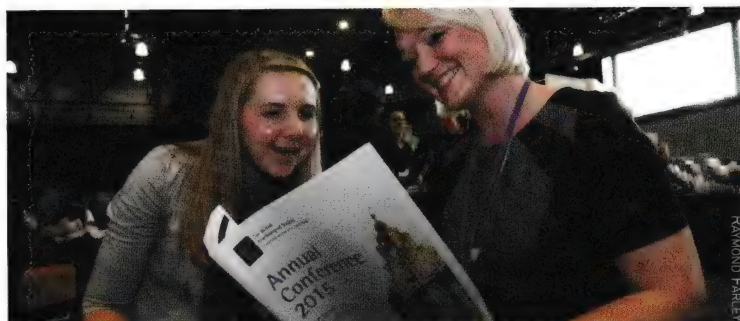
The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has released a new report, *Preventing Small Problems from Becoming Big Problems in Health and Care* (see tinyurl.com/lyhvcyqd), which aims to explore the reasons behind some of the complaints against health and social care workers. Evidence from across health and care regulators, outlined in the report, showed that around half to three quarters of complaints were conduct-related – for example, poor communication – and that these types of complaint are on the rise.

Chair of the Council Anna van der Gaag CBE said there were negative consequences, for complainants and the professionals involved, in bringing such complaints to a regulatory body. She added: 'These include emotional and psychological costs, as the professional may not return to the work for which they have been trained, and the complainant may never feel able to trust the health care system again.'

The first part of the report

is a literature review by Zubin Austin, a Professor of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto, which looks into how competence in health and care has many meanings, as well as many frameworks. These include traditional frameworks based on knowledge, performance, psychometrics, reflection and outcome-based approaches. The author shows how newer, emerging constructs around teamwork, emotional intelligence and engagement may be those which enable health and care to shift closer to a model that is fit for purpose in modern times. It concludes that although checklist approaches may still be necessary, they are not sufficient, as the complexity of health and care increases and patients and service users expect a different relationship with professionals.

The second part of the report, by Christensen-Moore and Walsh at the Picker Institute, is a qualitative mixed-method study. This comprises a retrospective analysis of a sample of fitness



The BPS Annual Conference 2015 was held on 5–7 May at the ACC Liverpool, on the banks of the River Mersey.

More than 500 delegates were treated to a packed schedule of top speakers, including keynotes from Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE on mental capital and wellbeing at work, Professor Edgar Jones on air-raids, terrorism and the crowd, Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore on the social brain in adolescence, and Professor Richard Crisp on adapting to diversity. There were parallel supervision, trainee and student conferences, along with a host of Society award lectures. Professor Dorothy Miell delivered her Presidential Address, and handed over to incoming President Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes. Professor Hacker Hughes launched the Society's Member Network Review – see www.bps.org.uk/membernetnetworkreview.

Thomas Elton, BPS Professional Development Centre Manager, said: 'It was fantastic to see the many and diverse areas of psychology come together to share research, practice and ideas. There was a real buzz around the conference, with high delegate expectations met with the content of the programme. There was something for everyone within the themes of the conference, with the different streams, 90 poster presentations, and 248 submissions received.'

Dr Peter Branney (Leeds Beckett University) is Chair of the Society's Standing Conference Committee. He told *The Psychologist*: 'The conference was a celebration of the rich diversity of psychology with speakers from as far Australia and Japan. I particularly liked talking to Reverend Richard Coles, who spoke at the Gala Dinner, and hearing about his struggles with boundaries and confidentiality in his pastoral work. These were issues that were also highlighted in the launch of the teaching ethics competencies.'

Reports from the conference will appear online at <http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk> and in our July issue. We also produced a special digital edition to mark the conference, compiled from archive pieces by speakers at this year's event: see tinyurl.com/psychconf15

to practise cases, and interviews with users and professionals about the triggers for disengagement in the workplace and the ways these might be mitigated. The study identified links between poor supervisory structures, lack of peer support, professional isolation, workload management problems, and incremental disengagement from practice. The authors concluded that identifying triggers for disengagement early on was possible in the right circumstances, for example where a culture of no blame was encouraged

and where managers were offering support for staff.

Van der Gaag concluded: 'My hope is that this new research will help to generate more activities at the reflective end of the spectrum, and reduce the activities at the regulatory end. Creating opportunities for reflection and honest conversations with trusted colleagues can be a means of addressing problems early on. It is in everyone's interest to prevent harm, to reduce complaints, and to see more emphasis on support, kindness and compassion in health and care.' ER

Neuroscience and criminal justice

A recent report, compiled by the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, has explored how often American courts currently use neuroscience in trials. *Gray Matters: Topics at the Intersection of Neuroscience, Ethics and Society* (tinyurl.com/k9s8ckd) points out the potential benefits neuroscience could have to the US legal system in the future, while also advising caution.

The Bioethics Commission is a panel of leaders in medicine, science, ethics, religion, law and engineering, advising the US President on issues arising from advances in biomedicine and related areas of science and technology. In its first volume, *Gray Matters: Integrative Approaches for Neuroscience, Ethics, and Society*, published in May 2014, the Commission had

analysed why and how to achieve ethics integration early and explicitly throughout neuroscience research. This was in response to a presidential request from 2013, with Barack Obama writing: 'We should consider the potential implications of the discoveries that we expect will flow from studies of the brain, and some of the questions that may be raised by those findings and their applications – questions, for example, relating to privacy, personal agency, and moral responsibility for one's actions; questions about stigmatization and discrimination based on neurological measures of intelligence or other traits; and questions about the appropriate use of neuroscience in the criminal justice system, among others. It will also be important to

consider these types of questions as they relate to different life stages, from infancy through old age.'

The second *Gray Matters*, pulled together from public meetings and consultation and published in March, states that neuroscience has become an integral part of the criminal justice system in the US. 'In 2012 alone, over 250 judicial opinions – more than double the number in 2007 – cite the use of neuroscience by criminal defendants arguing their brain made them do it. Already, over 5 per cent of murder trials and 25 per cent of death penalty trials feature criminal defendants using neuroscience to argue for lesser responsibility or punishment.'

As well as being used by defendants, neuroscience evidence is used by

prosecutors to predict potential future risk of offending or to assess competency to stand trial, and by defence attorneys as a mitigating factor in a person's sentencing. The case of Peter Jordan Chiesa is outlined: he shot and killed two of his neighbours, and despite evidence of his planning the murders, Chiesa was convicted of the lesser offence of second degree murder after the jury saw brain scans that showed damage to his prefrontal cortex, temporal lobes and cerebellum, which the defence argued would affect his impulse control and temper.

Despite pointing out that the use of neuroscience in the courts is still in its infancy and therefore 'might offer greater utility for guiding policy decisions rather than helping to resolve individual or criminal cases', the report does postulate that it could allow for more accurate and empirical assessments of individuals' intentions, motives, knowledge and mental states. 'Already, defense attorneys have attempted to use neuroscience to try to prove something about individuals' mental states, for example, that they lacked the ability to act with purpose.' The authors conclude that gradual introduction of neuroscientific evidence and concepts, after they are validated, well understood and interpreted accurately, could potentially be highly valuable.

Other topics covered in the report include cognitive enhancement, and capacity and the consent process. It concludes with 'one overarching recommendation that pertains to all funders associated with the BRAIN Initiative' (tinyurl.com/kw8fjks) – that it 'should establish and fund organized, independent, multidisciplinary efforts to support neuroscience and ethics research and education'. ER

REF PENALISING JUNIOR RESEARCHERS

A survey into the effects of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) on early-career researchers has shown that many feel that it creates pressure and anxiety that largely impacts on those at the 'bottom rung' of the career ladder. Many also reported a culture of aggression and bullying, at a departmental level, as well as a two-tier hierarchy between teaching and research, which they say is used to inhibit career mobility of those stuck in teaching positions.

Dr Charlotte Mathieson (Institute of Advanced Study, University of Warwick) carried out the survey and presented her results at Westminster Higher Education Forum's 'Next Steps for the REF' conference. Of the 193 researchers who responded, a majority were within eight years of their PhD submission.

Many of the respondents felt an increased amount of pressure in the job market, with an intense focus on 'REFable' publications. Mathieson also said that those researchers who did not have REFable publications were stuck in casualised contracts that were short-term and teaching-heavy, giving them little time to work towards getting published.

Mathieson said she asked participants an open-ended question about other concerns they may wish to express and found high levels of disillusionment, dissatisfaction at the profession

and cynicism around the REF, as well as comments about the effects on individuals' mental health. 'Insecurity and anxiety were the watchwords of this survey,' she said.

She added, in her presentation: 'In some respects, the REF has become a byword for a wider culture shift in academia – a shift driven by processes that extend beyond the assessment exercise itself – but it is nonetheless a focal point around which early-career researchers see very real, material impacts. If that is so, then perhaps with some work, the REF also has the potential to drive more positive changes in coming years.'

On a more positive note, 68 per cent of those who filled out the survey said they felt that the REF had changed their attitude towards impact, and were thinking more about public engagement from an early stage of their research. Mathieson said that while there have been problems raised with the measurement of impact it was encouraging to see a cognitive shift in this area coming from those starting out on their careers. She added: 'This is encouraging looking ahead to 2020, if the weighting of impact does, as expected, become more significant than ECRs will be well-placed to address this remit.' ER

Are you an early-career researcher in psychology with views on the REF? E-mail psychologist@bps.org.uk or tweet @psychmag.

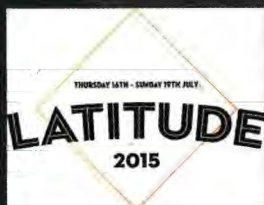
The Psychologist will be making an appearance at a major UK festival this summer. 'The Psychologist and Wellcome Trust presents...' slot at the Latitude Festival pairs psychologist Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore with author Fiona Neill, for a discussion in the Literary Arena titled 'Being Young Never Gets Old – Teenagers Debunked'.

Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore (pictured), from the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, is an internationally renowned expert on the teenage brain. Fiona Neill is a *Times* columnist whose new novel, *The Good Girl*, is described as 'a compelling portrait of a modern family dealing with a rocky marriage, a troublesome elderly parent and two teenagers exploring their sexuality'. The story focuses on the potentially alarming repercussions of cyberbullying and teen sex in the digital age. Our editor Dr Jon Sutton, who will host the discussion, conducted his PhD in the field of bullying.

The Latitude Festival, which celebrates its 10th birthday this year, draws a crowd of around 40,000 to Henham Park in Suffolk for three days of music, comedy and the arts. Dr Jon Sutton said: 'As a regular punter at Latitude for many years I have watched with interest as the amount of psychology-related content they put on has grown. I made contact to see if they would be interested in a partnership, and I am really thrilled with the idea Tania Harrison and I have come up with.'

'A live event like this is a new venture for *The Psychologist*, so I am nervous but extremely excited at the prospect of reaching out to a large and new audience in an innovative way. Professor Blakemore is consistently fascinating; she knows the author; and I may have some vague input based on my past academic life! So the stars are aligned for an interesting session. And of course, that's just one tiny part of a huge weekend with hundreds of acts across numerous stages.'

The festival takes place 16–19 July – see www.latitudefestival.com for more information and tickets (see also advert on p.437).



Cheltenham Science Festival

The Times Cheltenham Science Festival will include a host of psychologists and neuroscientists talking on topics from risky professions to the existence of free will. The six-day festival will also include events supported by the British Psychological Society.

The three events organised by the Society will begin on 3 June with a journey through the senses with head of the Oxford University cross-modal laboratory, Professor Charles Spence, and molecular gastronomist Jozef Youssef. The pair will show how taste is not just about the tongue but also involves sight, hearing and touch.

Charles Spence will also be presenting alongside Roger Newport (University of Nottingham) on 5 June in a session about illusions. They will demonstrate common illusions and other, more baffling varieties that can affect taste, cause your nose to 'grow' or your arm to disappear.

On 4 June psychologist and historian Peter Lamont will be speaking at another BPS-supported event about thoughts, emotions and desires, which, he will show, are not simply connections in the brain but depend on connections between brains. Using words, videos and music, the audience will experience 'mind control' and discover a new way to feel.

Among the many other fascinating talks and events will be an enlightening event with Rory Sutherland, author of *The Spectator's* Wiki Man column, who will speak about behavioural economics, neuroscience and nudging, as well as ways people can learn from the social sciences.

While one in four people will suffer from mental health disorder during their lifetime the treatment for depression, anxiety and many others is shrouded in mystery – with tales of biased studies funded by drug companies and trials hidden from the public eye. David Adam

will join psychiatrist Guy Goodwin as they discuss the facts behind therapies and drug-based treatments.

Neuroscientist Vince Walsh and behavioural scientist Nick Chater will explore professions where people have to take risks with multi-million pound deals, or with life and death decisions. Along with professional risk takers they will talk about the psychology of convincing yourself to face danger, and decision making under pressure.

Whether or not we have free will is an age-old debate among philosophers, but modern neuroscience has weighed in with its own ideas on the matter. Philosopher Julian Baggini and neuroscientist Patrick Haggard will discuss this from multiple perspectives. **ER**
I Cheltenham Science Festival runs from Tuesday 2 June until Sunday 7 June, and the full Festival programme is available at tinyurl.com/kkrsw87



The Twins Early Development Study (TEDS) based at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, has celebrated 20 years of ground-breaking scientific discovery at an event that explored the genesis of TEDS, its key achievements to date and its future direction.

Thanks to 20,700 UK twins, scientists using cutting-edge research in psychology, psychiatry and genetics have been able to unpick the complex relationship between nature and nurture, transforming the way we think about genetic and environmental influences on diverse areas of behavioural development.

Early collaborators Dr Bonny Oliver and Professor Philip Dale opened the event, describing the birth of TEDS and its humble beginnings, before introducing Thalia Eley, Professor of Developmental Behavioural Genetics and Deputy Director of TEDS, who talked about the science and the stories of TEDS.

Robert Plomin, Professor of Behavioural Genetics and Director of TEDS, acknowledged the study's major impact in 'changing the zeitgeist in terms of nature and nurture, moving the whole discussion closer to a balanced view.' He thanked members of the 'TEDS family' for their contributions to the success of the project, and recognised the crucial backing provided by the Medical Research Council's Social, Genetic & Developmental Psychiatry (SGDP) Centre, the project's home at King's. He acknowledged SGDP directors past and

present, including founder Professor Sir Michael Rutter, Professor Peter McGuffin and current director Professor Francesca Happé, for their support.

We spoke to Professor Eley about the past, present and future of TEDS.

What has been your proudest achievement or defining moment while working on the TEDS project?

My proudest achievement was when Robert asked me to become Deputy Director of TEDS with a view to taking over as Director in 2018. It is such a wonderful project and leaves such a lasting legacy, I was really honoured to be given that role. Another very proud moment was when my first PhD student Dr Alice Gregory, now a Reader at Goldsmiths, completed and was awarded her PhD (in 2004), having used data from the TEDS sample for many of her analyses.

How has the project changed over the years, in terms of its focus or how it's conducted?

The main change has been to shift from asking the parents to tell us about their children, to asking the twins to tell us about themselves as they are now young adults. I used to be told I would know I was old when policemen started looking young. Instead I feel old now that the twins I have worked with since they were toddlers are all young adults building their own independent lives! Another big shift for us has been to move to using the internet for a lot of our assessments. This

really makes it practical and in many ways more fun for the twins themselves.

What are you working on now?

I am working with a PhD student called Laurie Hannigan on some analyses in which we are exploring how the twins and their parents saw their relationship during the teenage years – what they saw the same and what they saw differently. The next step will be to look at how that relates to emotional and behavioural symptoms they also reported during that period.

What's next for TEDS?

We just received our fifth programme grant from the MRC in which we will assess all the twins in their early 20s and also do an in-depth assessment on a subset of them, finding out how they are doing as they navigate the first steps of independent adult life. For me personally, a real excitement is that the TEDS twins are beginning to have children themselves. I have been working for a few years now with a design called 'Children of twins', which allows you to disentangle the relative influence of genes versus the environment on transmission of traits within families down through the generations. Having so much data on the TEDS twins from when they were very young will put us in a unique position when it comes to understanding intergenerational transmission. **JS**

I A video about the study, 'TEDS – The Journey So Far', is available at youtu.be/-LAGbuQnBnQ

Helping science reporters get their facts straight

April saw *The Guardian* host an online discussion about how academics and the media can work more efficiently together to produce better and more accurate reports of scientific findings. Among the panel of contributors were psychologists Pete Etchells (Bath Spa University) and Nadja Reissland (Durham University), as well as science media professionals.

The debate comes in the wake of a *British Medical Journal* paper which found that hype in science reporting comes not only from journalists but also from press releases (see our report at tinyurl.com/l7telhy). The article looked at 462 press releases from 20 leading universities in the UK alongside the original peer-reviewed research papers and resulting news stories.

The authors, led by Professor Petroc Sumner (Cardiff University), used the following outcome measures: whether any of the stories, press releases or papers advised readers to change their behaviour, contained causal statements drawn from correlational research, or inferred to humans from animal research beyond that stated in the associated academic papers. Among the press releases they found 40 per cent contained exaggerated advice, 33 per cent contained exaggerated causal claims and 36 per cent contained exaggerated inference to humans from animal research.

Academics from varied fields also joined the discussion to outline their concerns about dealing with the media; whether press offices and even academics themselves over-hype scientific findings; the benefits of speaking directly to journalists; and whether

universities should bypass contacting the media and allow findings to be disseminated on social media.

One point of discussion was the experience academics had of dealing with journalists. Largely the consensus was that these experiences had been positive, but most of the members of the discussion agreed that they had seen many examples of headline-grabbing science journalism.

Giving a journalist's perspective, user Joe Turner, said there were issues with journalists who are often under large amounts of

level of involvement academics have in the publication of press releases about their work. Many agreed that press releases should be made more clear, and Dr Etchells said: 'I would love to see press releases that have a very clear section at the end saying (a) this is what the study does show, (b) this is what the study does not show, and (c) these are the limitations of the study.' There was also agreement that press releases and subsequent news stories about journal articles should include a link to the original paper.



...36 per cent contained exaggerated inference to humans from animal research

pressure and have little time to compile articles and cannot approach authors for comment. He added: 'There are few professional science journalists, few outlets to write about much science and low pay. Academics need to know, above all, they can't ask me for editorial control over my work. If you think you can control the way that the media writes about your work, you are wrong.'

The discussion moved on to university press offices and communication teams and the

Also speaking about press releases, the Wellcome Trust's head of media, Helen Jamison, said academics and press offices should work closely together to ensure press releases are balanced, newsworthy, but not hyped: 'Whenever a press release goes out with an academic's name on it, it's in their interests for them to also ensure its accuracy – working collaboratively is the only way to achieve this,' she added.

Some contributors suggested that academics may not wish to speak to journalists after press releases were published for fear of their results being hyped or misrepresented. Dr Reissland said on this point: 'Taking the time with journalists is essential, but both journalists and academics' time is limited hence I always prepare for questions which journalists might have before the press release. Also I found it helpful to be able to explain the research in detail to a few selected key journalists who came to visit me or even talk at length on the phone.'

The issue of potential hype stemming from journal articles themselves was also raised by Rebecca Nesbit. Commenter marinajoubert said in response: 'I'm currently reading up about this phenomenon of the "medialisation" of science... There seems to be concern that some scientific studies are chosen and planned – from the start – with a view to attracting media interest. Giving the point of view of pressures within psychology, Etchells said: 'Certainly in psychological research, there is far too much emphasis on "novel", exciting results. Which breeds a culture of researchers feeling the need to jazz up their papers, usually by putting throwaway lines in discussions and abstracts which overhype the results.'

One point, posted by user MikeSimpson, sparked much debate. He suggested that university press offices should, rather than sending press releases to journalists, communicate new research directly to the general public who would then disseminate the content on social media. He added: 'If that's done properly, then people with an interest in the topic will find out from the uni, in a way that is accurate and engaging, rather than through a newspaper or other media source whose primary goal is generating readership.'

Reissland said in response that she disagreed and supported having professionals who could help academics get their message across. She added: 'Social media is as difficult to handle as the printed press. Both need to be accurate.' ER

I Read the full discussion in the comments section following the *Guardian* article at tinyurl.com/ob9duwn

The highs and lows of the serotonin theory of depression

A *British Medical Journal* editorial (www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h1771) on serotonin and depression, which made the claim that newer SSRI antidepressants are less effective than older tricyclic drugs, has been met with criticism from psychologists and psychiatrists. The article by Professor David Healy, also said SSRIs had led to the marginalisation of cheaper and more effective treatments.

Professor Healy wrote: 'In the 1990s, no academic could sell a message about lowered serotonin. There was no correlation between serotonin reuptake inhibiting potency and antidepressant efficacy. No one knew if SSRIs raised or lowered serotonin levels; they still don't know. There was no evidence that treatment corrected anything.'

According to Healy, the lowered serotonin story 'took root in the public domain rather than in psychopharmacology. This public serotonin was like Freud's notion of libido – vague, amorphous, and incapable of exploration – a piece of biobabble.' Healy suggested this 'myth' has been reinforced across the general public and in the complementary health market, where people are encouraged to eat foods which 'boost' the neurotransmitter.

Many academics commented on the editorial, including Professor Simon Wessely (President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists). He said that while it was unclear how antidepressants helped depression, it was established that such drugs – along with psychological treatments – were helpful in depression. He added: 'Most important of all, the newer drugs (the SSRIs) are safer if taken in overdose than the older tricyclics. People should not change their current medication on the basis of this editorial alone.'

Dr Clare Stanford, Reader in Experimental Psychopharmacology, UCL, said: 'Professor David Healy's article treads a path that is well-worn but out of date. He argues that selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) antidepressants are used because of a pervasive myth that

they boost serotonin levels, but this is something of a straw man. He makes the mistake of assuming that antidepressants reverse a functional abnormality in the brain that causes depression. Actually, the theory that low 'levels' of serotonin in the brain (whatever that means, functionally) causes depression died many years ago, in spite of the fact that a deficit in the synthesis of serotonin in the brain can trigger relapse of depression in some patients who are in remission – a fact which he also fails to mention. By contrast, the monoamine theory of 'anti-depression' is alive and kicking. There is plenty of evidence that SSRIs increase communication from neurones that release serotonin, as well as other monoamine transmitters, and that the ensuing downstream changes, such as creation of new neurons (neurogenesis) or modification of gene expression, can

ameliorate depression. In short, SSRIs probably switch on anti-depression, rather than switch off depression (which could explain the rapid efficacy of ketamine).'

Professor Trevor Robbins (University of Cambridge) told the British Psychological Society that a more objective view of the evidence would be that changes in serotonin function are likely to contribute to many symptoms of, and forms of, depression, but are obviously often not the primary causal factor. He continued: 'SSRIs appear to help some, but not all, depressed people, also their mechanisms of action are not completely understood but almost certainly do so via affecting serotonin function. It is naive to think of levels of serotonin as being the crucial element; the system works in a more complicated way which is gradually becoming better understood.' ER



30 years of parapsychology research

The Koestler Parapsychology Unit, based at the University of Edinburgh, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Founder member Caroline Watt first became interested in the psychological reasons behind apparently paranormal phenomena while writing an essay on the topic in her final-year exams at St Andrews University. Dozens of students have undertaken PhDs at the Unit and some have gone on to establish new parapsychology research centres at other universities. Dr Watt said there had been a few ups and downs over the years, including a restructure of the department after the death of the Unit's head, Professor Robert Morris, in 2004 (see her article '20 years at the Koestler Parapsychology Unit' in the July 2006 issue). She added: 'However, the restructuring put us on a much

more secure footing and the continuing staff, me and Dr Peter Lamont, are now fully integrated with the work of the psychology department and the wider University, both of which are beneficial for parapsychology, in my opinion.'

The future of the Unit will remain based in research and teaching in parapsychology, but Watt has plans to increase its public engagement. She said: 'My online parapsychology course is thriving, and I have a book, *Parapsychology: A Beginner's Guide*, in the hopper. And I've co-created a Science of the Paranormal interactive workshop with Professor Richard Wiseman. It's touring science festivals this year, from Brighton to Orkney, and I'm going to be staging it at the 2015 Edinburgh Fringe, I can't wait!' **ER**

Three from ten for UK psychology

Three UK universities have been ranked in the top 10 in the world for psychology. The QS World University Rankings by Subject placed Cambridge second, Oxford fourth and UCL ninth.

The rankings are based on four factors: academic reputation and employer reputation, where academics and employers are asked which institutions they see as excellent either for research or for the recruitment of graduates; and citations per paper and h-index, which measures the productivity and impact of the published work of scientists.

Professor Trevor Robbins (University of Cambridge) questioned whether h-index and citations per paper were actually measuring independent factors. He said: 'Naturally, we are happy to see that we have retained our ranking in this year's QS ratings. We are especially pleased that the newly merged

Department of Psychology now represents the diversity of the subject, for example from social to psychobiological areas. We would be interested to learn more about the precise criteria and the relative weightings of the four main factors that are being used by QS to compute these ratings. Doubtless, different criteria and weightings would lead to different outcomes.'

Five other UK universities also made it into the top 50 in the rankings, among them King's College London – up from 28th place last year to 22nd this year. Professor Shitij Kapur, Dean and Head of School at King's College's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, said he was delighted at the result. He added: 'It is notable that we have risen so dramatically in the QS World Rankings even before we start our brand new BSc in Psychology this September. We expect that this innovative

course will further strengthen our reputation as a centre of excellence for psychology education and see us climb even higher in the rankings in future years.'

Biophysicist and pharmacologist David Colquhoun (University College London) had taken to social media to express concerns over the metrics used in such rankings, asking 'Who benefits from university rankings?' and 'How are they payed for and how are they monetised?' He told us they were 'statistically illiterate', adding: 'They depend on totally arbitrary weightings of several quite different inputs. Rankings are also published with no indication of errors, something that no journal would ever allow. Goldstein and Spiegelhalter showed in 1996 that the uncertainty in rankings is large, but they were ignored. It's not in the commercial interests of publishers to reveal how unreliable the rankings are.' **ER**

ALBERT WOLTERS PROFESSORSHIP

Ellen Bialystok (York University, Toronto) has been awarded the inaugural Albert Wolters Visiting Distinguished Professorship by the University of Reading. Professor Bialystok researches the effects of bilingualism on cognition and has shown that learning and speaking more than one language can have a significant impact on brain development, concentration and how we switch attention between tasks. Her most recent work suggests bilingualism offers some protection against symptoms of diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's. Bialystok visited the university's School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences for a special lecture in May. She said: 'It is a great honour to receive the inaugural Albert Wolters Visiting Distinguished Professorship and have the opportunity to spend time at the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism. Although less than two years old, this it has already established itself as a leading research centre in its field.'

LITERACY BOOK AWARD

Margaret Clark, Visiting Professor at Newman University and Emeritus Professor at Birmingham, has won the United Kingdom Literacy Association Academic Book Award 2015 for *Learning to be Literate: Insights from Research for Policy and Practice*. The award will be presented at the International Conference in July. Professor Clark's book is the first self-published work to have been submitted for the award. It is available at www.witleypress.co.uk. She has also self-published another book, *Synthetic Phonics and Literacy Learning: An Evidence Based Critique*, also available from Witley Press.

Seduced by superfluous neuroscience

It seems as though neuroscience is particularly popular and seductive. Not only is the discipline enjoying some eye-spinningly massive new grants, there are also ever more brain-branded products (like brain games and brain drinks), there are new disciplines like neuroleadership, and there's a growing obsession about the brain among many journalists, many of whom invoke brain science in odd contexts.

This atmosphere has led to a near-consensus among commentators that there is something distinctly persuasive about neuroscience. In fact, besides anecdotal argument, there is little solid evidence to suggest this is true (and some that it's not). A landmark paper from 2008 showed that images of the brain are particularly compelling, but this effect has failed to replicate.

Another key study, also from 2008, demonstrated the seductive allure of neuroscience – participants found circular explanations for psychological phenomena more convincing when they contained superfluous written neuroscience information. Unfortunately, this study had issues. For example, it's possible the addition of the neuroscience information simply acted to conceal the circularity of the explanations.

Enter Diego

Fernandez-Duque and his colleagues. Across four studies, they asked dozens of US psychology students to rate the quality of short explanations (some were sound, others were circular) for psychological phenomena such as 'face recognition' and 'emotional states'. The main take-away is that when superfluous neuroscience information (i.e. information that offered no further insight) was added to the end of these explanations, the students rated the explanations more highly. The students with superior analytical skills were just as prone to this effect. The students' religious and other philosophical beliefs (such as their endorsement of mind-body dualism) also made no difference.

Fernandez-Duque found the convincing influence of superfluous neuroscience information applied both to good-quality and circular explanations. However, the additional presence of brain imagery did not add to the appeal of the

explanations, thus confirming recent failures to replicate the allure of brain pictures.

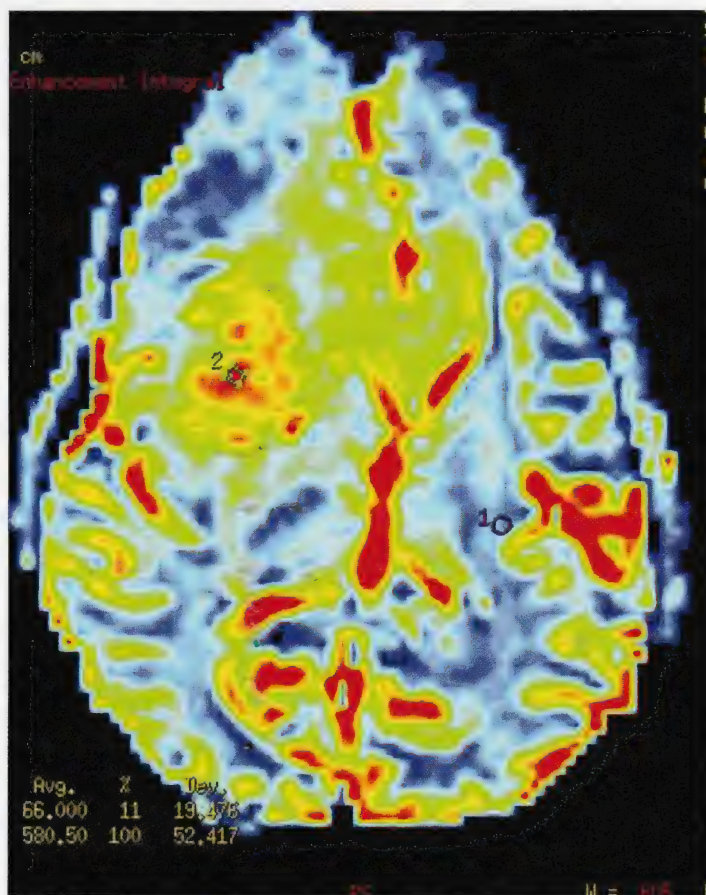
It's not just that extra, spurious neuroscience information made psychological explanations more convincing by making them longer. The addition of superfluous social science information did not increase the students' ratings of the explanations. Neither is it simply that neuroscience is seen as a 'hard science' adding weight to purely psychological explanation. When the researchers tested the addition of superfluous

chemistry-based, maths, genetic or physics information (i.e. science disinclines also considered 'hard' or prestigious), this did not lead the students to rate the explanations of the psychological phenomena more highly (this despite the fact that, on their own, these extra superfluous snippets were considered just as high quality as the extra neuroscience information).

The researchers say all this suggests there is something uniquely convincing about neuroscience in the context of psychological phenomena. They believe the most plausible reason is that psychology students endorse a 'brain-as-engine-of-mind' hypothesis – that is, they 'assign to neuroscience a privileged role in explaining psychological phenomena not just because neuroscience is a "real" science but because it is the most pertinent science for explaining the mind'. That the students who endorsed dualist beliefs (seeing the mind as separate from the brain) were just as wooed by

superfluous neuroscience information somewhat undermines this interpretation.

It will be interesting to test whether these findings hold true for the general public, and for people in other cultures for whom the brain might be considered less important. If the allure of neuroscience is found more widely, it's a worrying situation. As the researchers explain: few, if any, mental phenomena have single causes. 'As such, infatuation with any single source explanation – whether it is the brain or something else – may impede humans' progress to find and accept more complete explanations.' CJ



In *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*

Autistic children's sensory experiences, in their own words

In *Autism*

Children diagnosed with autism often have distinctive sensory experiences, such as being ultra-sensitive to noise, or finding enjoyment in repeated, unusual sensory stimulation. However, much of what we know about these experiences comes from the testimony of parents, researchers and clinicians. Now Anne Kirby and her colleagues have published the first report of autistic children's sensory experiences, based on these children's own accounts. As the authors say, 'children's voices are still rarely heard or taken seriously in the academic arena,' so this is an innovative approach.

Twelve autistic children aged 4 to 13 were interviewed in their homes. The children's autism varied in severity, but they were all capable of conducting verbal interviews. The researchers used a range of techniques to facilitate the interviews, such as playing family video clips of the children to prompt discussion of specific episodes. Kirby and her team said their first important finding was to demonstrate the feasibility of interviewing young children with autism.

Careful analysis of the transcripts from the interviews revealed three key themes. The first of these – 'normalising' – showed how the children considered many of their experiences to be just like other people's, as if rejecting the notion that there was something distinct or odd about their behaviour, and also showing a certain self-consciousness (contrary to existing research that suggests self-consciousness is impaired in autism).

Interviewer: What about things you don't like to touch or feel on your skin?

Child: Um, sharp stuff.

I: Sharp stuff? [smiles] Yeah, exactly.

C: Um, like most people do

I: Yeah

C: Um [pause], hot stuff.

I: Yep.

C: Like, burning hot, like pizza that just came out of the oven.

...

I: Do you have a favourite thing that you like to eat?

C: Uh, pizza.

I: Yeah? When it's not too hot, right?

C: Right. That's what most people say.



It feels like... 'the unknown is gonna come'

to their sensitivities, so as to participate in normal daily activities. The researchers said this is contrary to past findings that suggest people with autism don't want to be 'neurotypical' (perhaps such feelings can emerge later).

Another theme was the methods the children used to recount their experiences, including using anecdotes, demonstrating (e.g. by imitating the noise of the car engine, or mimicking a disgust reaction), by repeating their own inner speech from particular experiences, and, in the case of two children, by using similes. On that last point, one child likened eating spinach to eating grass, another likened loud voices to a lion's roar. 'The use of simile as a storytelling method seemed to suggest a sort of perspective-taking that is not expected in children with autism,' the researchers said.

The final theme concerned the way the children frequently talked about their sensory experiences in terms of their responses to various situations and stimuli. For example, the children spoke of their strategies, such as covering their ears, watching fireworks through a window, and watching sport on TV rather than in the arena. They also told the interviewers about their uncontrollable physical reactions, such as the pain of loud noises or teeth brushing. When he hears loud music, one little boy said: 'It feels like my heart is beating, and um, my, uh, my whole body's shaking. Mmm and uh, and my eyes, uh, they start to blink a lot.' The children's reactions were often tied to their fear of particular situations or objects, such as inflated balloons. It feels like 'the unknown is gonna come,' said another child.

The study has obvious limitations, such as the small sample and lack of a comparison group, so we can't know for sure that children without autism wouldn't come up with similar answers. However, the research provides a rare insight into autistic children's own perspective on their sensory worlds. 'Through exploration of how children share about their experiences, we can come to better understand those experiences,' the researchers said, ultimately helping 'how we study, assess, and address sensory features that impact daily functioning among children with autism'. CJ

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People are overly optimistic about the benefits of optimism

In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

'It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.' The sentiment articulated here by psychology pioneer William James is currently in vogue, if its preponderance in self-help books, motivational posters, and memes is anything to go by. But are we pinning too much on positive thinking?

A research team led by Elizabeth Tenney asked participants to guess how much a given task is affected by optimism, then compared this to how people actually fared when they were feeling more or less optimistic. So in one instance, 'task completers' attempted a maths task, having been given false feedback that told them, based on their training performance, they were likely to do well or poorly, thus influencing their optimism. 'Predictor' participants then guessed how the completers would perform,

knowing that these people didn't differ in calibre, only in the artificial feedback they'd received. Predictor participants expected the optimistic completers to do significantly better than those feeling pessimistic, but the reality is they didn't.

Another experiment used a 'Where's Waldo?' task where task completers could study each complex image for as long as they wanted as they sought to pick out the figure hidden within. We might expect optimism to deliver results through sheer tenacity, and indeed the optimistic task completers did persist for about 20 per cent longer on the task. But this translated into a scant 5 per cent



Most students struggle to take effective lecture notes – here are two ways to help them

In *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*

Sit in a university lecture and you'll see most students scribbling away taking notes (or tapping away on laptops). Unfortunately, while note-taking



ought to be beneficial in principle – by encouraging reflection on, and systematic organisation of, the material – countless studies have found it to have little to no benefit. It's likely

this is in part because of the way students take notes. Many simply record verbatim what the lecturer is saying.

Now the US psychologists Dung Bui and Mark McDaniel have tested two ways to help students take better notes. The

first is to provide students with notepaper containing a lecture outline, with headings and subheadings of the material. The idea is that this eases the mental demands of taking notes.

The second method is to provide students with notes that contain illustrative diagrams – these go further than an outline and show the key components of a system, with labels explaining how the different parts interact.

Bui and McDaniel asked 144 undergraduates to take notes while they listened to a 12-minute lecture about car brakes and pumps. At the start, some of them were given a skeletal outline of the lecture, others were given an annotated diagram of the parts and steps involved in a car's brakes. There was also a control group who

were simply given a blank piece of note paper.

Afterwards, all the note papers and materials were removed and the students were distracted for half an hour with a word learning test. After this, the students were tested on their understanding of the first part of the lecture by free recall (that is, they were asked to type out as much as they could remember). Then they answered a series of questions on the same topic. Finally, they completed a test of their 'structure building' ability – essentially how good they are at forming a coherent mental structure out of information. For this, they read four passages of text and then answered questions on them.

Regardless of their own ability level, the students who received a lecture outline performed better at free recall of the lecture than the control participants. They also took more comprehensive notes. When it came to the specific questions on the lecture material, however, the lecture outlines helped high-ability students but not those with low structure-building ability. By contrast, both high- and low-ability students who received annotated diagrams performed better at free recall than the controls and at answering the questions, despite actually

taking fewer notes. The researchers said this is probably because diagrams help students see the major components of a system and how they work together.

'These two features in conjunction essentially provide a representation that can be directly appropriated for constructing a more complete mental model,' they said.

Further analysis showed that the students given an annotated diagram, not only took fewer notes than the other students, but their notes contained a higher proportion of references to the cause-and-effect dynamics described in the lecture. This suggests the diagram helped the students to focus on extracting the most important information for understanding the topic at hand.

The researchers said their findings have practical relevance for lecturers who want to use learning aids to 'help all students across the entire range of ability'. Of course, this study was about the teaching of a scientific topic, so it's not clear how the findings would generalise to other subjects. However, the researchers said that for topics for which illustrative diagrams are not practical, 'perhaps other aids that help scaffold construction of a coherent mental model might be developed'. CJ



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(statistically non-significant) improvement, not the hefty 33 per cent improvement expected by the predictors. Once again, people were shown to expect optimism to produce results in situations where the reality was otherwise.

A final experiment demonstrated that even when attention isn't drawn artificially to people's optimism, we still overrate its importance. Here, nine participants were each asked to estimate how 99 task completers had fared on a task, guided by character profiles of the completers, which included, among a host of other information, their level of optimism. Each profile characteristic gave participants more or less insight into the completers' true performance: for instance, enjoyment of the test was a good, but not perfect, indicator that the person had performed well on the test. Participants were quite accurate in how much weight they gave to these cues – except for optimism, which they treated as a much more powerful factor than it truly was. This result suggests it wasn't the way the earlier experiments were framed that led predictors to make too much of optimism; they are happy to do that all on their own.

This work doesn't suggest that optimism is ineffective as a broad strategy for approaching life, or at helping us fulfil objectives at a broad scale. But it does suggest that we put more on the shoulders of optimism that it can bear. If you do badly at a test, rather than fretting that the cause was your negative mental attitude, it might be better to simply focus on your knowledge and approach. **AF**

LINK FEAST

Brain Disorders? Precisely

An editorial in the journal *Science* says syndromes once considered exclusively as 'mental' are being reconsidered as 'brain' disorders.

tinyurl.com/o2c93gc

Tylenol Doesn't Really Blunt Your Emotions

Blogger Neurocritic casts a sceptical eye over a recent study published in *Psychological Science*.

tinyurl.com/pvm5rbl

How to Exploit Male Sexual Competitiveness to Raise Money

Pacific Standard reports on a new study that looked at charity donations made to runners in the London marathon.

tinyurl.com/oj29j32

If I Were Prime Minister: I'd Make Sure We Were More Gentle With Crisis Care in Mental Health

Clinical psychologist Vaughan Bell argues that more funding is required to treat highly distressed patients with the compassion they need.

tinyurl.com/puzfurf

The Man Who Couldn't Stop Giving

What a Brazilian man's pathological generosity says about the biological roots of philanthropy.

tinyurl.com/nkmqqwp

The Strangest Sounds in the World

As these weird audio illusions show, people have radically different opinions about what reaches their ears, says David Robson.

tinyurl.com/qcc75jt

DIGEST DIGESTED

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Memory of the pain of a marathon fades with time. When Przemyslaw Babel approached runners three to six months after their last marathon, most of them underestimated how much pain they'd been in and how unpleasant it was. *Memory*

Researchers have videoed a group of six repeat burglars breaking and entering a real residential house. Compared with six students, the burglars showed signs of 'expertise' including spending more time in rooms containing more expensive items and coming away with a more valuable haul. *Psychology, Crime and Law*



Men and boys with an older sister tend to be less competitive than their peers. That's according to a study that asked high school pupils and university students to choose whether to earn modest rewards based on their own maths or maze-solving performance, or potentially greater rewards in a competitive tournament context. *Personality and Individual Differences*

It's possible to change your personality at will. Researchers asked students how they wanted their personalities to change and then gave them personality and behaviour questionnaires to fill out intermittently over 16 weeks. The students' personalities and behaviour tended to change in line with their goals, albeit by only modest amounts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

Twitter users who make jokes about OCD may find that it backfires. Participants liked fictional Twitter users who mocked or trivialised the condition less than those who tweeted about it with respect and compassion. *Computers in Human Behavior*



An analysis of real-life interviews at a job fair has debunked the myth that most interviewers make a hiring decision in the first four minutes. Although some snap decisions were made, most took place later in the interviews or even after they'd ended. Experienced, confident interviewers were more likely to make snap decisions. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*

Young children start using time duration words, like seconds, minutes and hours, long before they have a complete understanding of their meaning. From four and up, they know the rank order of the duration terms, but it's not until six or seven that they can pair up the feeling of different lengths of time with their designated duration words. *Cognitive Psychology*



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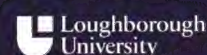
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This is improbable too

Marc Abrahams, *Guardian* columnist and founder of the Ig Nobel prizes, with more research to make you smile and think

I collect stories: stories about improbable things, things that make people laugh, then think. Improbable is, simply: what you don't expect.

I research improbable research, and in the April 2013 issue of this publication I shared some of this from my book *This Is Improbable*. In *This Is Improbable Too*, that 'too' is meant to imply two things. First, that this book is second. And second, that the stories I write about do not stand alone – the people who did these things also did other things, some of which are fully as unexpected. It's easy to assume that the good story you know about a person is the good story about that person. In my experience, poking through studies and books, and chatting and gossiping with thousands of improbable people, if there's one good story about a person, chances are high that other stories exist too, and that some of those stories are even better than the one you knew about.

The gift of incompetence

In their Cornell studies, psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger supplied scientific evidence that incompetence is bliss, for the incompetent person. They staged a series of experiments, involving several groups of people. Beforehand they made some predictions, most notably that:

- I incompetent people dramatically overestimate their ability; and
- I incompetent people are not good at recognising incompetence – their own or anyone else's.

In one experiment Dunning and Kruger asked 65 test subjects to rate the funniness of certain jokes. They then compared each test subject's ratings of the jokes with ratings done by eight professional comedians. Some people had a very poor sense of what others find funny – but most of those same individuals believed themselves to be very good at it, rather like David Brent of *The Office*.

Another experiment involved logic questions from law school entrance exams. The logic questions produced much the same results as jokes. Those with poor reasoning skills tended to believe they were Bertrand Russell or Mr Spock.

Overall, the results showed that incompetence is even worse than it appears to be, and forms a sort of unholy trinity of cluelessness. The incompetent don't perform up to speed; don't recognise their lack of competence; and don't even recognise the competence of other people.

Dunning explained why he took up this kind of research: 'I am interested in why people tend to have overly favorable and objectively indefensible views of their own abilities, talents, and moral character. For example, a full 94 per cent of college professors state that they do "above average" work, although it is statistically impossible for virtually everybody to be above average.' In 2008 he and his colleagues revisited their findings with 'Why the unskilled are unaware: Further explorations of (absent) self-insight among the incompetent' in order to show

that their assessment was not a statistical artifact. Of course, Dunning and Kruger are themselves university professors (though at the time they did their original experiment, Kruger was still Dunning's student).

If you have colleagues who are incompetent and unaware of it, Dunning and Kruger's research is a useful and convenient tool. I recommend that you make photocopies of their reports, and send them – anonymously, if need be – to each of those individuals, much as the Italian economist Professor Cipolla originally distributed his 1976 essay *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity* among his closest friends.

Brilliant early explanations of genius

Psychologists still grind away (sometimes at each other) at explaining what genius is, and where it comes from. The effort, now weary and tendentious, was exciting in its earlier days. In 1920 Lewis Terman and Jessie Chase of Stanford University published a report called 'The psychology, biology and pedagogy of genius' summarising all the important new literature on the subject.

Those early 20th-century psychologists showed a collective genius for disagreeing about almost everything.

J.C.M. Garnett, in a study called 'General ability, cleverness, and purpose', offered a formula for genius. Measure a person's general ability; then measure their cleverness, then square both numbers and add them together, then take the square root. Genius.

We learn about C.L. Redfield, who 'cites 571 specially selected pedigrees to prove his theory' that 'rapid breeding inevitably leads to the production of inferior stock', but that 'inferior stock can be transformed into superior stock in 100 years, and into eminent men in 200 years'.

James G. Kiernan wrote a monograph called 'Is genius a sport, a neurosis, or a child potentiality developed?' Terman and

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Chase tell us that 'Kiernan, after a description of the ability of various men of genius, arrives at the conclusion that genius is not a sport nor a neurosis.' Kiernan's paper hints, right at the start, that its author knew neurosis intimately. The byline lists his credentials at some length.

A book by Albert Mordell explains that 'the literary genius is one who has experienced a repression, drawn certain conclusions from it, and expressed what society does', and that 'By making an outlet for their repressions in imaginative literature Rousseau, Goethe and many others have saved themselves from insanity'.

Bent on being thoroughly inclusive, Terman and Chase mention a book called *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology*, by G. Stanley Hall. 'In two volumes', they write, 'Hall has given us an epochmaking study, chiefly from the psychological point of view, of the greatest moral genius of all time.' Terman and Chase seem to carefully dodge a bullet (or maybe a firing squad or even a massive artillery bombardment) of criticism, remarking only that 'It is impossible even to characterize such a monumental work in the few lines here available, much less to summarize it'. There's much more.

All told, Terman and Chase describe 95 scholarly and semi-scholarly papers and books, devoting a sentence or three to each of them. The exception, the lengthiest section of their report, is a lavish description of Terman's own recent studies, commencing with the words 'Terman devotes 102 pages of his latest book to...'. Terman's writings, reportedly, are filled with insights 'of special interest'.

Princely behaviour

By reputation, stockbrokers have manipulative personalities. So do people who sell cars or buildings. Professor Abdul Aziz took the measure of these groups of professionals, hoping to see whether each lives up or down to the legend.

Aziz, who teaches business at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, together with colleagues published three studies a decade ago: 'Relations of Machiavellian behavior with sales performance of stockbrokers'; 'Machiavellianism scores and self-rated performance of automobile salespersons'; and 'Relationship between Machiavellianism scores and performance of real estate salespersons'. All appear in the journal *Psychology Reports*.

Aziz explains that a Machiavellian person is someone who 'views and manipulates others' for 'personal gain, often against the other's self-interest'.



Stockbrokers, car salespersons and estate agents appear to show positive relationship between Machiavellianism and sales performance

He says this 'modern concept of Machiavellianism was derived from the ideas of [Niccolò] Machiavelli as published in [his book] *The Prince* in 1532', and that interest in it as a personality trait blossomed in the 1970s.

Aziz used a questionnaire based on psychological tests devised in the 1960s that claim to measure Machiavellianism by presenting statements and asking the

test-taker to agree or disagree (see tinyurl.com/5vzjmzg). The statements range from the goody-goody: 'Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives', to the not-so-goody: 'The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that the criminals are stupid enough to get caught'.

Aziz prepared similar questions.

He got answers from 110 brokers who sell stocks on a commission basis. Aziz also wanted to know how good these stockbrokers were at their sales work, so he asked them to compare their own sales performance with that of their colleagues.

Aziz would have preferred not to take the brokers' word for this. But, he writes, 'the company was not willing to disclose the actual amount of sales by individual stockbrokers'. After analysing what the stockbrokers told him, Aziz reports a strong association between the brokers' 'Machiavellian behavior scale' rank and how good they claim to be at selling.

His conclusion: The stockbroker data support the 'assumption of a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and sales performance'.

Aziz then did a similar study of 80 car salespersons, all of whom work on commission. He asked them his Machiavellianism survey questions. He also asked each to tell him '(a) the number of cars sold during the previous year and (b) the income bracket that most closely matched their income during that year'. His conclusion: What the car salespersons told him provides 'partial support for earlier findings'.

Rounding out the Big Three, Aziz then talked with 72 estate agents who earned their money selling property on commission. The things they told him, Aziz says, 'support earlier results from samples of stockbrokers and automobile salespersons'.

A few other studies have cited Aziz's

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work. One of the first was a Canadian report called 'Psychopathy and the detection of faking on self-report inventories of personality'.

Beauty queens and battling knights

The authors, at Stockholm School of Economics and Stockholm University, explain: 'We explore the relationship between attractiveness and risk taking in chess. We use a large international panel dataset on high-level chess competitions which includes a control for the players' skill in chess. This data is combined with results from a survey on an online labor market where participants were asked to rate the photos of 626 expert chess players according to attractiveness. Our results suggest that male chess players choose significantly riskier strategies when playing against an attractive female opponent, even though this does not improve their performance. Women's strategies are not affected by the attractiveness of the opponent.'

Defending payphones and parking spots

As pay telephones disappear from our cities, with them vanish opportunities to watch an entertaining, maddening form of behaviour. The behaviour was documented in a study called 'Waiting for a phone: Intrusion on callers leads to territorial defense'. The report came out in 1989, before mobile phones nudged public pay phones towards oblivion.

Professor R. Barry Ruback, with some of his students at Georgia State University, performed an experiment. They began by asking people what they would do if, while talking on a public pay telephone, they noticed someone else waiting to use that phone. Most people said they would hurry up and terminate their call.

The researchers put that common belief to the test. They lurked discreetly near public telephone booths in the Atlanta area. Seeing someone engaged in a call on a pay phone, they would send a trained stooge to hover expectantly. The stooge 'simply stood behind the caller, sometimes looking at his watch and putting his hands in his pockets'. Sometimes they sent two stooges. Every stooge was 'instructed not to stare at the subject'.

In the absence of stooges, people's phone calls lasted on average about 80 seconds. When a single stooge stood nearby, people stayed on the phone longer – typically about 110 seconds. And when two stooges queued up, clearly waiting,

waiting, waiting for access to the telephone, people kept using that phone much longer – averaging almost four minutes.

After varying the experiment in small ways, trying to tease out exactly what was or wasn't happening, the researchers decided they had seen a clear cause and effect – that 'people stayed longer at the phone after an intrusion, primarily because someone was waiting to use the phone'.

Even in the absence of payphones, one can, while strolling through town, see bursts of this kind of 'territorial defence'. They happen in the street and in car parks, wherever motorists vie for parking spaces.

Professor Ruback went behaviour-hunting in a shopping mall parking lot near Atlanta. In 1997 he and a colleague, Daniel Juieng, produced a report with a title that hints at more violence than the paper delivers: 'Territorial defense in parking lots: Retaliation against waiting drivers'. When the researchers saw someone get into a car, preparing to drive away, they measured the time until the car actually departed. They saw that, consistently, drivers took longer to leave if someone else was obviously waiting for their space.

Ruback and his minions forced the issue, sending their own drivers, in various cars, all with particular instructions. They learned that if their 'intruding' driver honked a horn, the departing driver would take an especially long time to leave. They also learned that men would leave more quickly if they saw that the person waiting to take their place drove a blatantly more expensive vehicle. Women, though, were not cowed by such things.

Red: bull

Bulls care little about the redness of a matador's cape. Psychologists have been pretty sure about that since 1923, when George M. Stratton of the University of California published a study called 'The color red, and the anger of cattle'.

'It is probable', Stratton opined, 'that this popular belief arises from the fact that cattle, and particularly bulls, have attacked persons displaying red, when the cause of the attack lay in the behavior of the person, in his strangeness, or in other factors apart from the color itself. The human knowledge that red is the color of blood, and that blood is, or seemingly should be, exciting, doubtless has added its own support to this fallacy.'

Professor Stratton, aided by a Miss Morrison and a Mr Blodgett, conducted an experiment on several small herds of cattle – 40 head altogether, a mixture of bulls and bullocks (bullocks are castrated

bulls) and cows and calves, including some who were accustomed to wandering the range and others who lived in barns.

The researchers obtained white, black, red and green strips of cloth, each measuring two by six feet. These they attached 'endwise to a line stretched high enough to let the animals go easily under it; from this line the colors hung their 6 feet of length free of the ground, well-separated, and ready to flutter in the breeze'.

The cattle showed indifference to the banners, except sometimes when a breeze made the cloth flutter. Males and females reacted the same way, as did 'tame' and 'wild' animals. Red did nothing for them.

Farmers seem to have already suspected this. Stratton surveyed some. He reports that 'Of 66 such persons who have favored me with their careful replies, I find that 38 believe that red never excites cattle to anger; 15 believe that red usually does not excite them to anger, although exceptionally it may; 8 believe that it usually so excites, though exceptionally it may not; and 3 believe that it always so excites'.

One of those three dissenters described her views, well, colourfully: 'A lively little Jersey cow whom I had known all her six years of life, chased me through a barbed wire fence when I was wearing a red dress and sweater, and never did so before or after. I changed to a dull gray, and reentered the corral, and she paid no attention to me, and let me feed and water her as usual. Also a Durham bull whom I had raised from a calf, and was a perfect family pet, chased me till I fell from sight through some brush when I was wearing the same outfit of crimson.'

More typical, though, was the farmer who told Stratton: 'In referring to the saying, "Like waving a red rag before a bull", I have found that to wave anything before a bull is dangerous business.'

Having the time of your month

The 'Menstrual Joy Questionnaire' was developed in 1987. It entered the world as part of a book called *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, written by Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton and Emily Toth. They were distressed at the existence and influence of the 'Menstrual Distress Questionnaire', a dour piece of work created 19 years earlier by Rudolf H. Moos at Stanford University.

Moos was a psychiatrist. He dived, professionally, into many kinds of distress, among them: depression; problem drinking; work-induced stress; and the social atmospheres of psychiatric

wards. Though few held it against him, Moos had little first-person experience of menstrual emotions. His was a rigorous academic understanding.

The three menstrual joy scholars were a cheerier lot. They were literary folk. Delaney was director of a prestigious fiction-writing award given by the Folger Library in Washington, DC. Lupton and Toth were English professors: Lupton at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Toth at Pennsylvania State University. Their menstrual savvy came from personal experience supplemented by a vast knowledge of literature.

The Menstrual Joy Questionnaire is short and simple, inquiring into 10 joyful menstrual matters, specifically: (1) high spirits; (2) increased sexual desire; (3) vibrant activity; (4) revolutionary zeal; (5) intense concentration; (6) feelings of affection; (7) self-confidence; (8) feelings of euphoria; (9) creativity; and (10) feelings of power.

Seven years after Delaney, Lupton and Toth launched their admittedly whimsical questionnaire, a team of researchers tried to gauge its impact. Joan Chrisler, Ingrid Johnston, Nicole Champagne and Kathleen Preston of Connecticut College published a study, called 'Menstrual joy: The construct and its consequences', in the journal *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. Their purpose, they stated, was 'to examine participants' reactions to the concept of menstrual joy... We found it too difficult to resist the temptation to see what women would think of the construct'.

And so they gave the Menstrual Joy Questionnaire to 40 women. Then they asked five questions:

- I What was your reaction to seeing a questionnaire entitled 'Menstrual Joy'?
- I Have you previously regarded menstruation as a positive event in your life? If yes, describe the menstrual cycle's positive aspects in your own words.
- I Did the Menstrual Joy Questionnaire encourage you to view menstruation in a different way? If yes, please explain.
- I Do you think you will be aware of or anticipate some of these positive aspects during your next menstrual cycle?
- I Do you discuss menstruation openly? If so, with whom?

Here, in the researchers' own words, is what they learned: 'The most common reactions to the questionnaire were incredulity or disbelief (27.5%), shock or surprise (22.5%) or the belief that the title

was sarcastic or ironic (25%). Other participants expressed initial interest (12.5%), amusement (12.5%), confusion (12.5%), irritation or annoyance (5%), appreciation (2.5%), or sadness (2.5%). Some participants expressed more than one reaction.'

'The results of this study', they concluded, 'are interesting for several reasons.'

Several years later, two British psychologists, Aimee Aubeeluck at the



Red bull – 'to wave anything before a bull is dangerous business'

University of Derby and Moira Maguire at the University of Luton, decided to replicate Chrisler et al.'s experiment, but chose to remove the title of the questionnaire altogether, so that no 'priming' for joy or distress would be introduced by the researchers. They found that the wording of 'Joy' questions alone was enough to make women think more favourably about menstruation 'as a natural event'.

Naughty thoughts, hemispherically

When a person thinks about naughty things, does one side of the brain get more exercised than the other? Eight scientists, led by Debra Lieberman, a professor of evolutionary psychology at the University of Miami, studied that question. Their report, 'Hemispheric asymmetries during processing of immoral stimuli', appears in the journal *Frontiers in Evolutionary Neuroscience*. The stated goal is to describe 'the neural organisation of moral processing'.

The researchers had to work with a few limitations – the same limitations that apply to anyone who tries to describe what's going on in the brain.

With the exception of a few crackpots or geniuses, scientists don't claim to understand how the 100,000,000,000 or so parts of the human brain manage to think thoughts. Many of those multitudinous parts are connected to each other in complex ways that are quirkily different in every person. Some of the connections change over the course of a life, or a day, or even a few minutes. Many tiny brain parts are clumped into big conglomerations, some quite distinct (hello, cerebellum!), but others have fuzzy locations and borders.

The study does not risk getting bogged down in those larger, complicated conundrums. It restricts itself to the simple question: How does immorality play out in the brain?

The scientists sought their answer by recruiting some test subjects. They confronted each volunteer with several levels of immorality, in the form of words and images.

The team used MRI machines to indirectly (via electromagnetic emissions) monitor where largish amounts of blood flowed in the brain as each volunteer confronted each example of immorality. In theory, anyway, blood flows most freely near whichever brain parts are actively thinking, or have just thought, or are just about to think, or are busily doing something else.

In one test, volunteers saw different kinds of printed statements. Some were about pathogens ('You eating your sister's spoiled hamburger, You sipping your sister's urine, You eating your sister's scab'); some about incest ('You giving your sister an orgasm, You watching your sister masturbate, You fondling your sister's nipples'); some about 'nonsexual immoral acts' ('You burgling your sister's home, You killing your sister's child'); and others about 'neutral acts' ('You reading to your sister, You holding your sister's groceries').

In other tests, volunteers saw other kinds of statements or pictures, each chosen for its evident moral content.

After all the immorality was seen, and the measurements made, the researchers calculated that the left side of the brain had been more involved than the right side. Thus, concludes the study: 'There is a left-hemisphere bias for the processing of immoral stimuli across multiple domains.'

I **Marc Abrahams** is Editor and co-founder of the *Annals of Improbable Research*. This article is extracted from his book *This Is Improbable Too* (Oneworld, £6.29) marca.improbable@gmail.com



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Opening up to disclosure

Anna Ruddle and Sarah Dilks consider whether therapists should talk about themselves in therapy

As psychologists, we are increasingly encouraged to work as equal partners with people to overcome problems or facilitate recovery, as defined by the individual. There is an emphasis on the common human experience of all parties. So should we be behaving differently with clients, opening up more, sharing our own experiences of stress, anxiety and resilience? Or would this be considered unprofessional and even risky?

questions

What do different approaches say about self-disclosure?
How is therapist self-disclosure experienced by clients?
Can therapist self-disclosure improve therapy outcomes?

resources

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is talking about it. It's time we started: we argue that a lack of systematic consideration of whether or how therapists should talk about themselves in therapy leaves us to grapple over what is 'unprofessional' and what is simply ordinary human interaction.

We are particularly interested in TSD as psychologists working with people who experience psychosis. We have noted the lack of attention to TSD in training and research within our field. This contrasts with discussions with our colleagues, which revealed the frequent and strategic use of TSD in therapy for psychosis. When someone is paranoid about your motives, it makes sense to explain your thinking and actions. Not answering questions about yourself ('I

wonder why you want to know that?') only raises suspicion. So we focus on the potential value of TSD, particularly with psychosis; the need for research to gain a deeper understanding of its use; and the scope for developing TSD practice guidelines.

What is therapist self-disclosure?

Many mental health professionals presume TSD refers solely to the disclosure of mental health problems. The recovery literature perhaps compounds this view, through the value it places on the employment of staff with personal experience of mental health problems. Social media and anti-stigma campaigns like Time to Change add to the emphasis on promoting personal openness about mental health problems. Amongst others, political commentator Alistair Campbell recently blogged about his own



What is 'unprofessional' and what is simply ordinary human interaction?

Psychologists from all corners of the discipline tend to work with people. We often hear about their lives, their hopes and fears, their highs and lows. But do they need to hear about ours?

As an example, consider working with people experiencing psychosis. Here, paranoia and social isolation often limit opportunities for ordinary interaction and impact on developing trusting relationships. The traditional stereotype of therapists as a silent 'blank screen' suggested it was unhelpful or even dangerous to share anything about ourselves with our clients. But recovery approaches to mental health problems (e.g. Department of Health, 2011; Slade, 2009) emphasise that the role of professionals is no longer to 'cure an illness' but instead to work with people towards what they consider a successful outcome.

We have explored therapist self-disclosure (TSD) in the literature and more anecdotally, and it is common practice. Everyone is doing it, but no one

experience of alcoholism and depression in response to comedian Stephen Fry's declaration of a suicide attempt.

However, we take a much broader view of TSD than simply the disclosure of mental health problems. Consistent with the therapy literature (see e.g. Reynolds & Fischer, 1983), we see TSD as the sharing of any aspect of our personal experience with our clients, whether this is:

- | the therapist sharing their thoughts and feelings as they arise in therapy, e.g. 'I've noticed you seem uncomfortable when I ask how you feel', or their rationale for actions in therapy; or
- | disclosure of therapist experience or information outside of the therapy room, from simple biographical information such as 'I come from Nottingham' to stories from their personal life, successful and unsuccessful coping strategies or experiences of having been through adversity, including mental health problems.

Other distinctions between types of TSD that we have found helpful from reviewing the literature and/or our own practice include:

- | reactive (client asks) vs. voluntary (therapist initiates);
- | positive vs. negative (e.g. 'I've noticed you're very caring and loyal' vs. 'When your worries spiral in conversation, it's hard for me to get my opinions across');
- | degrees of intimacy (e.g. 'I really admire people who always keep going' vs. 'I really admire you – you always keep going');
- | degrees of personal information (e.g. 'My cat didn't come home once and I felt anxious' vs. 'I lost my partner in a car accident and will never truly get over it'); and
- | similar vs. dissimilar to client experience (e.g. 'I also felt anxious when I was unemployed' vs. 'I don't agree that you're weak – in fact, I'm

inspired by your resilience').

We believe that context is key to determining the rationale for and consequence of any TSD. The same utterance may carry a very different meaning and impact depending on the particular client, therapist and the specific moment in therapy.

Different perspectives

Psychoanalysis originally called for neutrality, allowing clients to express their unconscious feelings and desires, enabling the therapist to interpret their meaning and consequences (Freud, 1912/1958). However, Ziv-Beiman (2013) draws attention to more recent strands of psychodynamic psychotherapy that actually encourage some TSD. And a recent review of research into TSD suggests 90 per cent of therapists do self-disclose to their clients (Henretty & Levitt, 2010).

Some therapy approaches, like social constructionist family therapy, (e.g. Freedman & Combs, 1996) actively advocate TSD. For example, in 'reflecting teams' clinicians talk in front of families about what they have observed in a session. They are encouraged to put their comments in their personal context (e.g. 'As an Asian female, I can sympathise with the daughter struggling to get her voice heard'). Associated narrative approaches such as the Tree of Life (Ncube, 2006) radically challenge traditional views of TSD by encouraging therapists to share their personal life stories and values with their clients.

In contrast to psychoanalysis and family therapy, cognitive behaviour

Why self-disclose?

(adapted from Henretty & Levitt, 2010)

- | To promote client disclosure
- | To foster the therapeutic relationship/alliance
- | To model for clients
- | To encourage clients' autonomy
- | To facilitate client self-exploration and self-revelation, especially around interpersonal patterns
- | To validate reality
- | To normalise and promote feelings of universality
- | To equalise power
- | To repair an impasse or alliance rupture
- | To correct misconceptions
- | To assist clients in identifying and labelling their emotions
- | To show similarities
- | To reassure
- | To build client self-esteem
- | To demystify therapy
- | To reinforce and/or shape for desirable client behaviour
- | To offer alternative ways to think or act
- | To help clients recognise boundaries between what they think and feel and what others think and feel
- | To provide clients with authentic human-to-human interaction

therapy (CBT) has little written about TSD. Some textbooks briefly reference its value in normalising a client's distress but only one article explores it in detail (Goldfried et al., 2003). Some recent 'third wave' cognitive approaches have given it slightly more attention, such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Harris (2009), for instance, advocates TSD 'if and when it's likely to be beneficial to the client in the service of normalization, validation, promoting self-acceptance, or enhancing the therapeutic relationship' (p.235).

The rationale for self-disclosure

The literature cites a wide range of motives for TSD, predominantly gleaned

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from surveys with therapists. Henretty and Levitt (2010: see box) summarise a number of these, stemming from their thorough review of quantitative research into TSD. Goldfried et al. (2003) also specifically outline the rationale for using TSD in CBT.

It seems particularly pertinent to use TSD to build a good working relationship and gain a client's trust early in therapy. TSD can also be used to model effective ways of coping (e.g. Dryden, 1990) and illustrate the commonality of unhelpful behaviours and thinking styles (e.g. 'I tend to be a bit of a perfectionist in my work and sometimes I find it exhausting too').

Note that disclosure might have a number of effects. It could help the client see the unhelpfulness of their current strategies; reduce distress by recognising we are all only human; or open up possibilities for new ways of thinking and acting. It may of course also induce anxiety – 'If she's a perfectionist, am I doing a good enough job in this therapy?! Clearly while a therapist may have a sound rationale for disclosing, the potential consequences need to be carefully considered.

As clinicians working with psychosis, we have noticed the particular value of TSD due to the specific difficulties in engaging people who are suspicious or socially isolated, and the stigma and social exclusion resulting from a diagnosis of psychosis. Individuals experiencing psychosis have often been marginalised by society. If we listen empathically to their unusual experiences, discuss ordinary reactions to suffering, but also look beyond these experiences and speak about 'normal' everyday things, this can be profoundly empowering and de-stigmatising ('she makes me feel like I'm someone special as well, that I'm worthy': client Tanya, quoted in Dilks et al., 2013, p.328). In this context, we think a number of reasons from Henretty and Levitt's (2010) list are especially pertinent: fostering the therapeutic relationship, correcting misconceptions, demystifying therapy, repairing an impasse in the alliance, validating a person's reality and normalising their experiences.

In our experience of working with paranoia, the early stages of therapy are critical in fostering the relationship and gaining someone's trust. Clients may misinterpret a benign comment in a

negative way or incorporate the therapist into their belief that there is a government conspiracy against them. Offering clients transparency about your motives and actions can reduce this suspicion (e.g. explaining 'I'm asking you lots of questions because I want to understand properly, but you don't have to tell me if you don't want to').

TSD can be used in these early stages of therapy to show you are an honest, warm person with no ill intentions. You might choose to use TSD via general 'small talk', referring to an episode of *EastEnders* or a recent football match. This builds a sense of alliance but also provides clients with genuine, authentic human-to-human interaction, demystifying therapy.



TSD can also be effective when used to validate a person's reality, even if this is seen as unusual or different to what others believe. This does not mean we have to agree with or endorse particular beliefs (so we might explicitly say 'I haven't personally experienced my neighbours trying to hurt me'). But as therapists, we can use our psychological understanding to offer a genuine empathic response (e.g. saying 'If I was thinking my neighbours wanted to kill me I would feel terrified'). Or we can show our understanding that specific beliefs make sense in the context of a person's life: 'If I had experienced all the abuse and violence you did growing up, I might also be on the lookout for people out to get me.'

The therapist sharing their own 'odd' experiences (Nelson, 1997, p.85), including hearing voices or feeling they've been followed, can be very helpful in illustrating the universality of certain types of human experience. Simply

providing information on the prevalence of experiences clients erroneously believe to be 'mad' or uncommon can also be a relief – for instance, see Ellett and Wildschut's (2014) recent article in *The Psychologist* on the commonality of paranoia.

Chadwick (2006), an experienced clinician in the field of psychosis, summarises his position as coming from a commitment to openness and mindful acceptance, which in his view necessitates TSD: 'Therapists need to be open and consistent... If I make a mistake, I apologise; if I am stuck, I say so; if clients ask me a personal question, I take the question at face value and answer directly... If the question is too personal, I would say this...' (p.75).

What's the impact of disclosure?

Henretty and Levitt (2010) comprehensively reviewed the quantitative research into TSD, demonstrating there are not enough studies to reach many conclusions. Their review suggested TSD enhanced clients' ratings of therapist warmth but did not have any reliable impact on other qualities traditionally deemed important to therapy outcomes, such as trustworthiness and empathy. TSD also appeared to induce more self-disclosure by clients if used infrequently and at a low to moderate intimacy level, compared to not disclosing or disclosing frequently. However, varying definitions make it difficult to generalise in this area, and there are other methodological flaws, including the use of analogue methodology (asking non-clinical samples to imagine a therapy situation) and surveys of therapists rather than direct analyses of 'live' therapy sessions.

To our knowledge, there are very few high-calibre qualitative studies exploring the experience of TSD, with the exception of two frequently cited studies: Knox et al. (1997), and Audet and Everall (2010). The latter phenomenological study of clients' experiences identified three types of effects of TSD: (a) 'forming a connection' early in therapy; (b) 'conveying presence' through being attentive and responsive and (c) 'engaging the client in a meaningful working relationship' (p.338). These authors exemplified how TSD could either facilitate or hinder these processes depending on how the disclosure was done and how it was received by clients. For instance, they quote: 'there was this feeling of relief and this person isn't going to think I'm a weirdo or I'm a screw up because they have this relevant

experience of their own' (p.335), in contrast to 'It's kind of like my therapist has a broken finger and my whole arm is broken, and she says, "But you know, we're the same"' (p.336).

Practice implications

We believe psychological therapists, especially those working with psychosis, are in need of more systematic guidance on the use of TSD. We feel the issue warrants more attention in training, both in teaching and placements. We hope this would encourage more open discussion and reflection in supervision. We also wonder about practice implications for other applied psychologists. How much should educational psychologists share of themselves when working with children? Or occupational psychologists with their clients?

As with any therapy skill, guidelines on TSD would need to be used flexibly. Use of TSD is likely to vary according to the therapeutic approach, stage of therapy, therapist's professional experience, personal preference, therapy process issues and the interaction between all these factors. While some guidance about staff self-disclosure exists in the recovery literature (e.g. Scottish Recovery Network, 2007) and some NHS Trusts are developing guidance (e.g. Dorset Wellbeing and Recovery Partnership, 2013), we are not aware of any specific to therapy. Henretty and Levitt (2010) do provide some detail in their helpful recommendations about 'what', 'when', 'why' and 'how' to self-disclose in therapy, based on their literature review. For example, they recommend that therapists 'self-disclose infrequently' and 'take into account the client's possible reactions' (p.73). However, their recommendations make clear there are no hard-and-fast rules for TSD. Rather, TSD requires careful consideration in relation to each specific client and their individual context. We would therefore encourage therapists to bear these what, when, why and how questions in mind whenever considering the use of TSD.

In addition it is also worth thinking about when *not* to self-disclose as a therapist (e.g. when a negative consequence is possible or likely). For instance, when the TSD may:

- I invoke envy in a client (e.g. 'I'm off to the Bahamas');
- I involve a personal experience the therapist has not overcome sufficiently to remain objective;
- I open up areas of questioning the therapist is not comfortable with;
- I inappropriately shift the focus of

therapy to the therapist (as one client put it, 'It almost felt like a parent-child relationship... like I was the therapist and she was the patient getting everything off her chest': Audet & Everall, 2010, p.335); or

- I encourage confusion about the nature of the relationship (e.g. TSD for some may imply that a more intimate personal relationship is possible).

With regard to 'how' to disclose, the therapist could consider informing a client that they might occasionally do this, or could seek permission in advance of a disclosure they think may have particular impact. They may also want to ask the client what their experience was of the TSD and possibly return to it later in therapy. Finally, therapists might consider rehearsing a warm but clear way of saying they are not comfortable continuing with a particular topic.

Research recommendations

Research is needed to develop clearer definitions of TSD and a greater understanding of its use and consequences. Although we have a particular interest in TSD in working with psychosis, we believe this applies to therapy more generally. Research would inform the theoretical underpinnings of TSD, allowing it to be incorporated more explicitly within therapy models. For example, research could be developed to test Ziv-Beiman's (2013) model of TSD as a pan-therapy 'integrative intervention'. She argues TSD has a dual effect by enhancing non-specific relationship factors and working as an active technique in its own right (e.g. encouraging insight, cognitive change or change in the experience of self and others). In relation to psychosis, research could examine how TSD might contribute to the key therapist activities identified in Dilks et al.'s (2013) grounded theory model of therapy processes in psychosis.

More systematic research is especially needed into the use and impact of TSD in real-life therapeutic encounters. For instance, while Goldfried et al. (2003) make reasonable speculations that TSD might impact on clients' engagement in therapy or have a micro-impact within certain CBT techniques (e.g. helping to elicit thoughts or reflect on experiments to test out beliefs), these hypotheses have yet to be tested.

We believe the most promising research will come from studying actual interactions within therapist-client pairs. This work would benefit from lessons learnt in therapy process research,

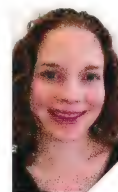
accommodating the complexities of investigating the impact of therapist-client interactions that are mutually influential (Stiles, 2013).

In this vein, Henretty and Levitt (2010) recommend 'future researchers... take into account multiple factors of therapist disclosure, such as intimacy/depth, duration/breadth, timing, quality, client readiness and content' (p.70). They also suggest considering whether the TSD was 'of positive versus negative information... before or after a client disclosure... volunteered or as a result of a client question, and the client's expectations and preferences' (p.70). Measuring these multiple factors would help capture the complexities of the therapeutic interaction.

Changing the narrative

In our experience, therapist self-disclosure is regularly practised yet rarely discussed. Its neglect within training, theory and research perhaps stems from a longstanding narrative that TSD may be unhelpful or even dangerous. Yet a review of the literature and an informal survey of expert psychologists working in psychosis revealed TSD is much more prevalent than one might think. Indeed, it seems therapists are actively engaging in TSD as a therapeutic technique in itself.

Of course, many clinicians may want to hold their own position on TSD, and some may be uncomfortable with the idea of training or guidelines. Yet mental health services are moving towards a more recovery-focused, anti-stigma, partnership model of working. Are we therefore approaching a position of expecting some therapist self-disclosure? If so, we need to build more systematic support, guidance and research around its use. This would help ensure we practise both ethically and effectively but also, importantly, that we look after ourselves.



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Youth employment – the missing facts

Angela Carter looks to a better understanding of young people by employers

Despite a small fall in the overall unemployment rate, nearly one million under-25s are unemployed. Recent work by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR, 2014) found that the traditional link between youth employment and economic growth has broken. Psychological research in this area mostly focuses on the issues of young people's motivation, lack of preparation for the world and long transitions between education and work. What the research fails to consider is how few entry-level jobs are offered to young people.

questions

Why don't employers want young people to fill entry-level jobs?
What can psychologists do to change employers' views?

resources

BPS DOP Working Group on Youth Employment: tinyurl.com/ojby4b
The Office for National Statistics: www.ons.gov.uk
Institute of Public Policy and Research: www.ippr.org
SKOPE (ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance): www.skope.ox.ac.uk

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working lives; and national government seeks to support and address the health and welfare issues of young people not in work, while at the same time being aware of the financial and longer-term economic issues facing an ageing society and long-term unemployment. Recruiters and managers claim to be seeking young talent to compensate for ageing workforces, but this does not appear to be adding to the jobs available to young people.

How are psychologists making sense of this situation, and what models and theories are guiding our activities?

The changing workplace

Current social arrangements of work are very different now from what they were 50 years ago (Savickas et al., 2009). Proliferation of work associated with industrialisation of the 20th century enabled the development of hierarchical work relationships and stable work patterns. These supported a step-wise development of knowledge, skills and abilities, often represented by the stage models of career development (Levinson, 1976; Super, 1957, 1990). As individuals matured and gained in skills and experience they progressed to the next level of organisational hierarchy. It was this upwards progression that gave young people opportunities to enter trades and professions at the beginning of their work experience.

But this is no longer true in the 21st century. Work arrangements are reacting to a labour market contraction, in response to economic recession and the challenges to local production and processing represented by increasing globalisation. Job prospects are less stable and more short-term, making the maintenance of full employment difficult and opportunities for upwards progression scarce. Many people are responding to these issues by taking a series of jobs, many of them part-time, or developing their own employment opportunities. Career planning needs to be more flexible and responsive to available opportunities; driven by the

individual's search for meaning at work, as opposed to being shaped solely by the needs and aspirations of employing organisations (Duarte, 2004). Explanatory theories of careers as stages and transitions must give way to flexible, individually driven and adaptive strategies that encourage young people to make the best of the scarce opportunities available for entry-level positions.

However, adopting adaptive career strategies is a difficult response for young people looking for a beginning to their work experience. Educators and careers advisers need to build new models of support to encourage adaption to less predictive situations. Consider dominant paradigms of career guidance, such as vocational matching (Holland, 1997) and person–environment fit as applied to individual and organisation needs (Schein, 1978). These may still be available to a privileged few whose personal and family networks offer career opportunities, or whose high standards of education allow entrance to knowledge working roles, but

this is not the case for the majority of young people looking for work.

Examining flows of young people between employment, unemployment, inactivity and education in recent reports from the ONS (tinyurl.com/p5yyk5p; tinyurl.com/mbnfkva) reveals a mixed pattern of tactics being used by young people. They are most likely to work in the lowest-skilled jobs (such as service and sales assistants), which for some are convenient to fit in around educational activities (27 per cent of full-time students work). There is a high incidence of churn in these jobs but they provide work experience and opportunities to try out a variety of jobs, enabling future career choice. Three factors were found to influence getting a job:

- 1 **Qualifications.** Young people with a degree are 2.6 times more likely to move out of unemployment compared with those without qualifications. Furthermore, young people who have already found employment (usually in lower-skilled job roles) are increasingly leaving work to gain extra qualifications that will enhance their job prospects.
- 2 **Job skill.** Gaining job skills was found to improve job tenure (between 2012 and 2013 employees were 1.4 times more likely to leave a lower-skilled job than a higher-skilled job) reducing the risk of unemployment. These latter factors suggest leaving education earlier and gaining work experience is likely to improve work prospects. Indeed, in 2013, 22 per cent of 21-year-olds with a degree (or equivalent) were unemployed compared to 18 per cent of GCSE holders. However, by the age of 24 this benefit reversed with only 8 per cent of graduates (compared with 12 per cent of GCSE holders) being unemployed.
- 3 **Duration of unemployment.** Those who have been unemployed for less than three months are 3.3 times more likely to move back to employment than those unemployed for over two years. Thus, young people taking on lower-

skilled jobs maintain their presence in the labour market preparing themselves for future skilled roles.

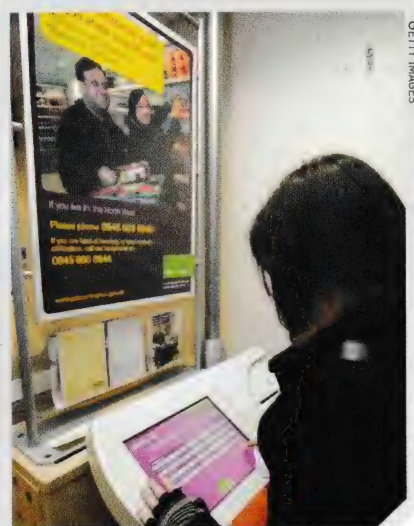
These data highlight that both education and job skills are crucial steps towards a young person gaining and maintaining employment.

The see-saw model

Research is contributing to an understanding of why young people have difficulties finding work. The focus has been on motivation (e.g. Vansteenkiste et al., 2005); lack of readiness for the work environment (e.g. Pring et al., 2012); and long, difficult transitions from education to the workplace (Symonds et al., 2011). However, much of this work focuses on young people themselves and not employers, and the trend to employ young people is decreasing.

While recession and globalisation are often quoted as reasons for employment changes, they may not fully explain the trend not to appoint to entry-level positions. Economic recession may have made the employment of young people less likely but it did not cause this change: UK organisations have been reducing the number of young people employed over the last 20 years (SKOPE, 2012). The fact that so few UK organisations employ young people seems to go unnoticed.

Taken together this evidence suggests a simple model of supply and demand would focus attention on the current issues of youth employment, giving a more holistic view of the problems and suggesting meaningful research and intervention agendas. Imagine a plank weighed down on one side by nearly one million young people looking for work, completely out of balance with the other end of the plank representing jobs provided by organisations: here we have the see-saw model of supply and demand in youth employment (Carter, 2013a). It is clear that the lack of demand from organisations is not sufficient to balance the high supply of young people who are



Young people (16–24) are 2.6 times more likely to flow from employment to unemployment than those aged over 40

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Symonds, W.C., Schwartz, R.B. &

seeking employment. Therefore, it is at the demand end of the model that research and innovation is needed in order to supply more jobs for young people.

Research and actions

With our focus set on increasing demand it is important to examine why employers are reluctant to provide entry-level jobs. Few studies have taken place to examine this question. However, there is emerging evidence that UK employers may be rejecting younger job candidates too swiftly (Palermo & Bourne, 2014). In a study of over 102,000 recent job candidates completing a 15-trait personality assessment, role profiles of employers' requirements were compared with candidates' profiles expressed as different age ranges (e.g. under 20, 21–25, and up to 51–60). Comparisons showed no overall adverse impact across the traits when role profiles were matched by trained professionals to inform the interview processes. However, small but significant differences were found between the age groups showing areas where young people needed to develop and also where they outshone the other age groups. For example, under-21-year-olds have a lower preference for influencing and social confidence, but these preferences change rapidly over the next five years. Therefore selection processes looking only at current preferences would be rejecting these candidates, ignoring their potential to develop these preferences (particularly if facilitated by development programmes). Further, comparisons showed those under 21 years had high levels of energy and stamina, were happy making rapid decisions and had strong achievement orientation (Ashridge reported similar findings when they explored the behaviours and needs of 2000 graduates and their managers: see Honoré & Paine Schofield, 2009). Therefore, in work contexts where these preferences were positively associated with job performance (e.g. in the service industry) younger people were

outperforming those older than themselves.

Two further studies contribute to our understanding of young people as active learners encountering barriers when seeking work. A qualitative study, conducted by second-year undergraduate students used interviews and focus groups to appreciate the voice of young unemployed people in an urban environment and compared their activities and aspirations with a student group (Carter, 2013a). Contrary to popular opinion the unemployed young people were more active than the student group; having a clearer vision of the work that they wanted to do (e.g. 'I have set my mind on starting a computer business in particular').

Further, a Delphi study exploring the job-seeking behaviours and experiences of British, European and Asian master's students following graduation (Carter, 2013b) revealed several barriers to gaining work in the various country contexts. For example, when asked about their job-seeking process and the attitudes of hiring managers, one participant explained: 'I passed 1st two rounds of interviews; but failed the 3rd round with the General Manager; their attitude was quite harsh during the process and [they] presented an annoyed feeling towards the end of the interview process. He started to talk about his career path...'.

These studies suggest employers need careful guidance and training about rejecting young people who may already have excellent job-specific skills, while others – such as the ability to influence and gain opportunities – require experience to develop. Further, it is important that trained professionals involved in selection and assessment (many of whom are practitioner psychologists) are made aware of these issues to inform their practice.

However, changing selection and assessment processes – which are often conducted with large numbers of applicants using online screening – may be difficult. If criteria are set such that

applicants need to be currently reporting preferences for influencing and social confidence, those under 21 years will be screened out at an early stage of the assessment process and will be unable to demonstrate their rapid decision making or their strong achievement orientation. This highlights the difficulties that practitioner psychologists encounter when they are unable to control areas of bias occurring early in assessment processes (e.g. prior to short-listing) or in the final stage of candidate selection (traditionally an interview with the hiring manager), when current competencies alone are often considered (favouring older, more experienced candidates) rather than appreciating competencies that can be developed in the workplace by younger candidates.

The qualitative studies also highlight differences in hiring managers' needs and perceptions compared with those of the young job seekers. Similar mismatches were identified in the Ashridge study exploring a multi-generational view of young people born from 1982 to 2002 (the so-called Generation Y: Honoré & Paine Schofield, 2009). Young workers were confident, questioning and ambitious, but demanded much support and development in the workplace. This could make managers reluctant to employ young people. In addition, managers interviewing young people require specialist training and advice on how to deliver developmental feedback to improve the attitudes and skills of young job seekers.

Implementation in the UK

Several organisations have taken steps to specifically develop entry-level jobs for young people and offer apprenticeships, such as London Local Authorities (LLA) (Ashworth, 2014; Matta, 2013). Apprenticeships are not a new concept but they have been criticised for being male-dominated and applicable to certain skills (e.g. building trades and engineering) (Ashworth, 2014). In the 1990s, following government support, apprenticeships were redeveloped to focus on occupational competence in a wide variety of industry and public sector organisations. Specific frameworks, such as those in finance, offer qualifications developing apprentices to chartered qualifications. These developments have resulted in general improvements in the number and quality of apprenticeships available and offer a viable alternative to university education in certain work roles.

Further government encouragement in the form of the 2009 Backing Young

Ferguson, R. (2011, July 28). *Pathways to prosperity*. Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Industry Trade Federation Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.

UKCES (2011). *The Youth Enquiry: Employers' perspectives on tackling youth unemployment*. Wath-upon-Deane: UKCES.

Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., De Witte, H., & Feather, N.T. (2005). Understanding

unemployed people's job search behaviour, unemployment experience and well-being. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 44, 269–287.

Britain campaign (see tinyurl.com/lgt4cs4) saw LLA pledge to take on 2000 apprentices during the period 2009 to 2012. One LLA with a high percentage of young people who were not in employment or education (NEETs) examined their organisational skills profile to find that they had skills shortages and an ageing workforce. They concluded it would be advantageous for them to develop an apprenticeship scheme to get local young people into work and to grow their own talent. The apprenticeship scheme was launched in May 2010 and was open to local residents aged 16–24 years, offering a 12-month employment contact using generic and health and social care frameworks. To date, the scheme has successfully employed 78 apprentices (with 35 per cent being retained within the LLA in permanent job roles) and is an ongoing part of their recruitment programme. Central to the success of this scheme are the four facets of support provided (close management of the training provider; mentorship and support for apprentices; mentorship and support for managers; and an apprentice forum). Of particular interest is the in-depth support offered to managers to firstly develop the apprentice opportunity and then to support managers throughout the apprenticeships.

A multi-level evaluation of the scheme (using Birdi's 2006 TOTADO Framework; Ashworth, 2014) showed that individual apprentices were enjoying the scheme and were willing to learn. The LLAs departments gained needed skills developed by the apprentices, the workforce age profile is becoming more diverse, and salary costs were reduced. Further, societal analysis shows the apprenticeship scheme is providing valuable work for young people, reducing the support required for NEETs; and is developing the LLA as a 'brand' (people in the local community now appreciate the work done by the LLA and see them as a viable employer). However, the evaluation did find that apprentices could be unreliable and time was needed to counsel them about their timekeeping and behaviour at work. Support to the scheme worked with apprentices to develop a code of conduct booklet.

Managers were concerned that the LLA could not provide longer-term job roles for apprentices. To redress this issue a redeployment register was used for



Apprenticeships have been criticised for being male-dominated and applicable to certain skills

apprentices coming to the end of their contact, to highlight further job roles that may be available in the LLA. By 2012 the retention rate of apprentices had risen to 55 per cent. Interviews with apprentices not retained by the LLA found the 12-month work experience offered skills and experience that were then valued by other employers (Ashworth, 2014).

From this case study we can see there are a range of benefits associated with employing young people. However, these come at a cost of providing support for both the apprentices and the employing managers. Much more knowledge of the benefits of this type of scheme is needed to increase employing managers' willingness to give jobs to young people and to accommodate the training and development needs of current staff as well as the young people.

Other case studies are out there, such as the forward-thinking community college that has forged relationships with external business partners to develop a coaching programme for students (Levi & Gosden, 2014). This is showing benefits not only for students but also for local businesses: widening skills of working with young people, developing viable succession planning opportunities and meeting skills shortages.

Summary

In summary, there are many benefits to employers in working with young people and these need to be emphasised in relation to the negative press that young job seekers often receive. In a balanced review of the issues, the intergenerational study (Honoré & Paine Schofield, 2009) offered recommendations for both young people (e.g. exploit your energy and enthusiasm; watch and listen) and those working with and managing young people (e.g. be open to new ideas and

useful challenge; but recognise areas where you may need to provide 'catch up' to certain standards).

In examining these issues it has become clear that the unwillingness to provide young people with work may lie in inflexible attitudes of hiring managers supported by ill-advised selection processes. Practitioner psychologists are well placed to influence these attitudes and provide appropriate training and development that will enable people from several generations to work more effectively together. I would urge psychologists and others to:

- | encourage the generation of work opportunities for young people; allaying fears, providing education and changing attitudes were necessary;
- | encourage employers to consider work that young people can excel in, rather than focusing on what they need to develop;
- | offer support and advice to managers who are considering employing young people and maintain this support during the employment cycle;
- | be aware that short-term work experiences may be enough to develop young people sufficiently to enter the job market;
- | raise awareness that age differences can influence preferences that may adversely impact on young people's performance in selection situations;
- | consider developing competencies as well as existing competencies in job selection; and
- | offer and maintain support to young people taking on new roles and to find ways of facilitating differences between young people and their managers.

Within the British Psychological Society the Division of Occupational Psychology facilitates a Youth Employment Working Group. The group's objectives are to raise awareness of the issues of employing young people so that they are better understood by employers and other stakeholders, including psychologists and HR professionals, and to stimulate intervention and research in this area. It is time to address bias towards the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of young people and develop work environments that support and develop their skills.



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Better not look down...

Leading neurosurgeon **Henry Marsh** reflects on mistakes, mystery and the mind

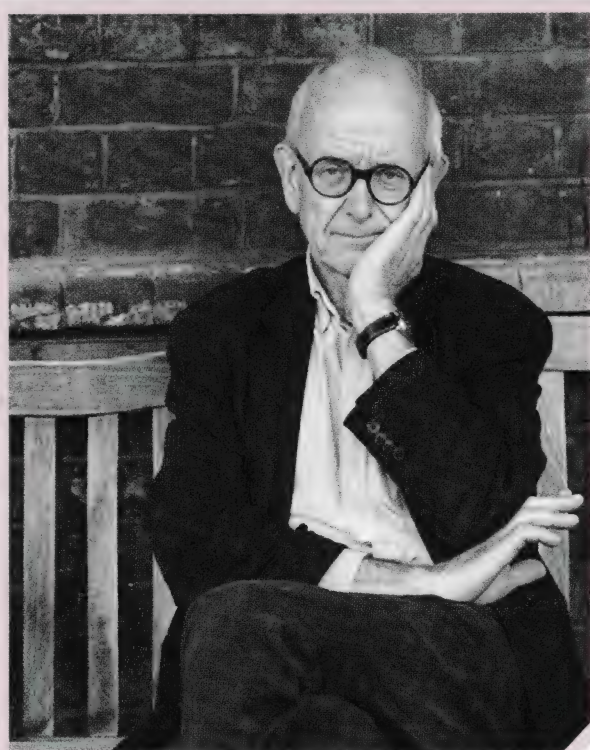
'Every surgeon carries about him a little cemetery, in which from time to time he goes to pray, a cemetery of bitterness and regret, of which he seeks the reason for certain of his failures.' *French surgeon René Leriche, 1951*

Two years ago, with retirement approaching, I thought I should look back on my career – almost four decades of neurosurgery – and reflect on what I had learned. This meant, of course, thinking about the many mistakes I had made over the years, since we learn little from success. So every night I took a notebook and pencil to bed with me and when I woke in the morning I would lie in bed and, drifting in and out of lucid dreaming, try to remember my mistakes. The ghosts of the patients who had suffered at my hands would drift up into my consciousness, like methane stirred up from a stagnant pond, long-forgotten and deeply painful to remember. It was an unpleasant process, and I soon discovered that if I did not write them down immediately I would quickly forget them all over again.

Doctors and lawyers involved in medical litigation usually distinguish between 'careless mistakes and errors of clinical judgement'. The former mistakes are negligent and culpable, the latter are not, and reflect the fact that medical problems are often complex and the consequences unpredictable. Even if the doctor has considered a problem carefully he or she can nevertheless make the wrong decision and the patient can come to harm. In my specialty of brain surgery, the harm can be terrible, and sometimes worse than death.

The essential distinction between the two types of mistake is that the doctor has been careful. A careful doctor is a good doctor, a careless doctor is a bad doctor. To my distress, as I lay in bed, I could not deny that many of the mistakes I was

remembering fell into the first category – I had been careless. They were also the mistakes I found most difficult to remember and I suspect that some of my worst mistakes remain buried in my



Henry Marsh CBE, MA, FRCS is a Consultant Neurosurgeon at St George's Hospital, London. His 2014 book *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery* was shortlisted for the Wellcome Book Prize.

subconscious or have been completely erased. It was also striking that the great majority of the mistakes had been mistakes in decision making, in deciding whether to operate or not, about how much of a tumour to remove, or in recognising a serious post-operative complication. Purely technical mistakes when operating are, in fact, rare, and the idea that the difference between a good surgeon and a bad surgeon is a matter of

'steady hands' mythical. And yet, like most doctors, I like to think that I am a good doctor. If you care for your patients and are a good doctor, how can you possibly be careless? It was difficult to escape the conclusion that my self-esteem relied on self-deception, a self-deception in part driven and supported by my patients' need to believe in me. But dangerous surgery – dangerous for the patient, that is – is difficult to do if you become too frightened by the risks, and it is why most doctors do not want to become surgeons, and in particular brain surgeons. In the words of B.B. King's song, 'Better not look down, if you want to keep on flying'.

It was while I was forcing myself to look down at the ground below me that

I read Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. I had been drawn to brain surgery as a young doctor not just by the glamour and danger (and my own experience of a young son with a brain tumour) but also by a fascination with the brain and neuroanatomy. I had even flirted with psychiatry as a career. I had, therefore, some knowledge of psychology before reading Kahneman, and marriage to a social anthropologist (Kate Fox, the author of *Watching the English*) – social psychology and social anthropology having much in common – has been an important part of my education as well. Reading Kahneman was revelatory – I learned that my carelessness was part of being human, that we are not as 'rational' as we like to think, whatever the lawyers might argue in court. More importantly, the book gave me tools with which to understand my carelessness in terms of cognitive biases.

There are many cognitive biases, and since so much of surgery is about assessing risks, probability and people, surgeons are vulnerable to a whole raft of them. Here are three examples from among the headstones of my inner cemetery.

A combination of biases

I carried out a routine operation on a young woman for a congenital malformation at the base of her brain that

had been causing severe headaches. It is a fairly simple operation and I had probably done well over a hundred similar procedures before. The operation went exceptionally well. By chance one of my colleagues was doing an identical operation in the next theatre and I could see that his operation was not going well. I felt rather pleased with myself.

My patient recovered unusually quickly and went home two days after surgery. A few days later her husband telephoned me to say that she was feeling unwell. He did not sound too troubled, and since I had never had any serious complications with this operation before I reassured him that there was nothing to worry about. Only at the end of the conversation did he mention that the wound was leaking. This should have alerted me to the fact that there was a potentially serious problem but I disregarded it. The 'availability heuristic' (I did not associate the operation with severe complications) combined with the 'framing effect' (the critical piece of information only came at the end of the conversation) and my 'optimism bias' (a high opinion of myself) resulted in significant delays in diagnosing a rare and very serious infection that left the woman catastrophically disabled.

The halo effect

Surgery is a practical craft and you learn it by doing it. Although a lot of work is being done to develop simulators, there is still no substitute for experience. A very important part of a senior surgeon's work is to train and supervise the next generation of surgeons. You learn most as a trainee when you are operating on your own and your senior is not standing beside you dictating your every move. There is a serious responsibility, therefore, for the senior surgeon to know when and how much of an operation to delegate. There is an ethical responsibility to the patient in front of you but also an ethical responsibility to your trainee's future patients. These two demands are not easily compatible, and require careful assessment of the trainee's abilities.

I delegated the beginning of an operation to a senior trainee whom I liked greatly. By the time I joined him (it is, in fact, standard practice to let the juniors 'open and close' neurosurgical operations), he had the patient's head open, so that I could no longer see exactly where he had made the opening. I assumed it was in the right place but it turned out it was not, and when I opened the meninges there was severe haemorrhage from the sagittal sinus, one

of the brain's major veins. The patient died as a result. The 'halo effect' – a term coined by Edward Thorndike to describe the tendency for an overall impression to influence the observer's feelings and thoughts about that person's character or properties – had distorted my assessment of my trainee's competence.

I would like to think that I am now better at judging my trainees and knowing when to intervene and when not to – but it has taken me many years and there were other, similar problems (though not quite so disastrous) on the way.

Anchoring

I had three simple lumbar disc operations to do in the private hospital. Two were on the right side, one on the left. The operation is done through a midline incision irrespective of the side of the disc prolapse but the surgeon then explores only the symptomatic side of the vertebral canal. I consented the patients myself, noting the side in each case on the consent form. I carried out the two right-sided operations but when it came to the third case the computer system crashed and I had no way of visually checking which side to operate on. My memory told me that the disc was on the right side and I operated on the wrong side. This is an example of the 'anchoring' effect:

relying too heavily on the first piece of information encountered (the 'anchor').

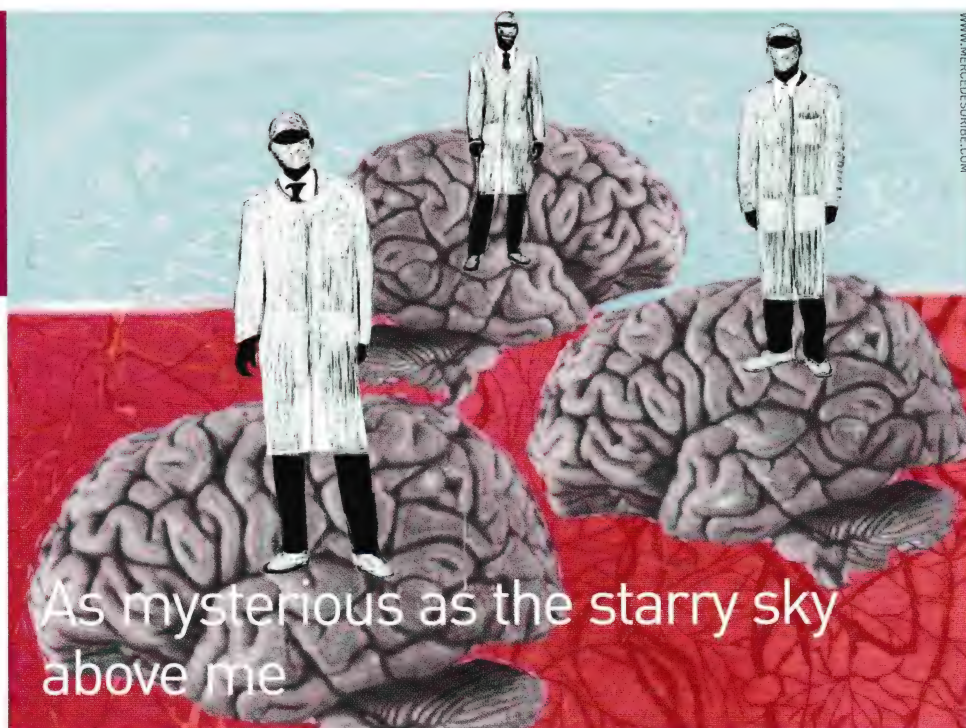
The story had a happy ending, however, in that the disc prolapse was large enough for me to remove it from the opposite (wrong) side, which only confirmed my (erroneous) belief I was operating on the correct side. The patient woke up with the left-sided sciatica cured but with some numbness in the right leg (a common post-operative and transient phenomenon). She was puzzled by this and I spent a long time on the evening after the operation trying to persuade her that her original sciatica had been down her right leg, so reluctant was I to realise that my memory had deceived me. I had to admit defeat when she showed me the consent form with 'left leg' written in my own handwriting. Fortunately she found this quite amusing, and her severe sciatica was better.

Learning from mistakes

The most important conclusion from Kahneman's book is that other people are better at seeing our mistakes than we are ourselves, and it follows from this that discussion of difficult cases should be an intrinsic part of surgical practice. In most surgical departments this takes place in retrospective 'Morbidity and Mortality' meetings, after the damage has been done, and – prospectively – in 'Multi-



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Brain surgeons must often manipulate the brain and sometimes remove parts of it. The surgery involved is often much cruder than popularly supposed. The brain has the consistency of jelly – it seems something of a cruel miracle that thought and feeling, an understanding of quantum mechanics, love, hatred, the obscure and lengthy utterances of NHS management, Beethoven's late quartets and First Division football all derive from this stuff.

When operating there is a constant struggle between wanting to get on with the operation and knowing that you should handle your patient's brain with the same respect with which you would want your own brain to be handled. Brain surgeons must resist the temptation to handle it as 'just another organ', yet it is impossible to see the brain as anything other than matter when operating on it.

That's not to say the physical matter of the brain is not a wondrous thing.

I became entranced by neuroscience as a second-year medical student. When I saw my first cerebral aneurysm five years later as a junior doctor, I knew immediately that all I had ever wanted to be, without realising it, was a brain surgeon.

I shared the common misapprehension that seeing the exposed, living human brain – and operating on it – would in some way explain the great mysteries of existence and make me preternaturally wise. At first, as a trainee surgeon, I was too preoccupied with learning how to operate to think much more along these lines. When I became a consultant, the burden of responsibility for my patients' lives left little time for philosophical speculation.

I am certain, though, that I have never doubted the material nature of thought and feeling. You cannot see people whose very personality and moral being has been altered for the worse by damage to the frontal lobes and maintain

belief in some kind of mind or human soul separate from the brain – at least, if you do, you must exercise extreme cognitive dissonance.

In recent years, however, as my career reaches its end and the pressures of work have lessened, I have come to understand that dealing with the brain as a physical entity on a daily basis has taught me only one lesson – that the brain is indeed infinitely mysterious. The scientific view of the world cannot even begin to explain how consciousness and subjective feelings arise from the electro-chemical activity of nerve cells.

This does not downgrade thought or free will or moral judgement but instead upgrades matter into something rather wonderful, which we do not understand. I cannot believe in an afterlife, but I find this great cloud of unknowing – that my own consciousness within me is as great a mystery as the starry sky at night above me (to borrow from Kant), and in some ways just as important – very consoling.

Disciplinary Team' meetings. The value of these meetings depends greatly on the complex interplay of the personalities of the various people present. My own experience of working in the NHS for almost 40 years is very much in keeping with Kahneman's comment that 'There is...[a] remarkable absence of systematic training for the essential skill of conducting efficient meetings.'

Why should surgeons be particularly bad at meetings? It is generally accepted that medicine is a stressful occupation with high (self-reported) levels of anxiety and 'burn-out' (see, for example, research by Samantha Brooks, and Charles Balch: tinyurl.com/omzfdwq and tinyurl.com/cxymb8p respectively). Surgery attracts ambitious doctors who like challenges, and it is probably true to say that surgical culture does not favour public admission of doubt or weakness. Surgeons, it is often said, as opposed to physicians, cannot tolerate ambiguity and see confident, quick decision making as a virtue, although many surgical problems are often difficult and uncertain. Besides, patients undoubtedly prefer confident, certain surgeons, and all surgeons must learn at an early stage of their career to pretend to a level of experience and confidence that inwardly they know they do not have. As a young consultant you will soon face the dilemma of a difficult case where one of your senior colleagues has greater experience than you have and yet if you do not take on difficult cases yourself, how will you ever improve your skills? Self-deception and denial – pretending to yourself as much as to your patient – become important mechanisms of self-defence when confronting problems of this kind. This means, of course, that surgeons do not always take naturally to meetings and discussion where their self-deception may be exposed. Interpersonal relations between surgeons within surgical departments therefore play a very important part in what happens to patients, for better and for worse. Good colleagues are a very important part of 'Patient Safety'.

Patient care

There are many ways in which neurosurgeons can avoid confronting the fact that an operation they have performed might have caused their patient harm, and that perhaps they could have carried it out in a less damaging way. 'The operation was a success but the patient died', as the saying goes. It is a standard joke among neurologists that if a brain surgeon says a patient has 'done well' all it means is that the patient can

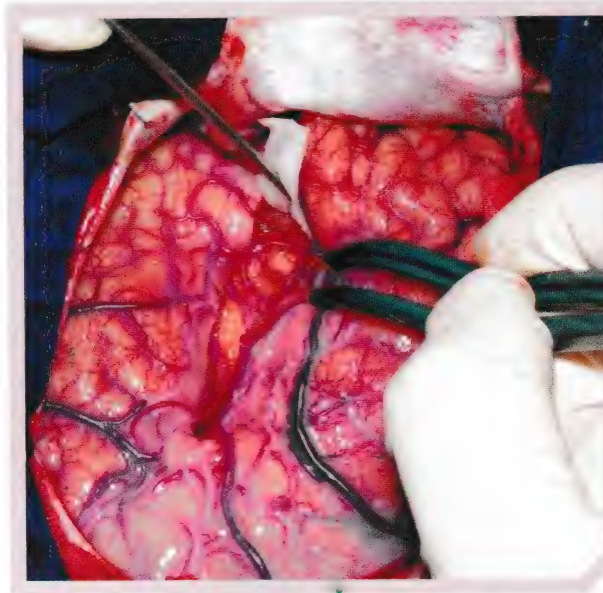
walk and thank the surgeon for operating, even though in reality the patient has been left hopelessly disabled. Brain surgeons often shy away from detailed psychological assessment of their patients in the post-operative outpatient clinic – perhaps because the more you look, the more problems you will find. The cognitive and psychological consequences of brain surgery can be subtle and easy to gloss over. They are easily justified on the grounds that the consequences of not operating would have been even worse. Judgement as to how to handle your patient's brain is all-important, and most surgeons, if they become patients themselves, are just as concerned with their colleague's personality (one might say psychology) and their reputation for sensible decision making as with their technical ability.

Doctors can make careless mistakes because of cognitive biases, but they can also make such mistakes because they do not care for their patients. It is often said – although as far as I know has never been convincingly shown – that surgeons have psychopathic tendencies. The antisocial personality disorder Factor 2 of Bob Hare's PCL-R model (unstable, socially deviant, criminality, impulsive violence) for diagnosing psychopathy is rather hard to apply to surgeons but the 'selfish, callous and remorseless use of others' with 'superficial charm' of Factor 1 can, I suspect, sometimes be observed.

In some respects, surgery is a blood sport – most surgeons become surgeons in a quest for stimulation and excitement as much as out of altruism, but the work is only exciting to the extent that you care for what happens to the patient after the operation. This care is usually based on empathy, but it can also be based on the wish for financial success and fame, and often a combination of both. The two motivations can be equally beneficial for patients (surgeons will not be successful in private practice if their patients tend to do badly), but surgeons who are primarily motivated by self-interest will probably be better exponents than their empathic peers of the arts of lying and manipulation. Furthermore, as Robert Trivers has written in *Deceit and Self Deception*, deceiving the self is the most effective way of deceiving others. As

social psychologist Peter Collett has explained, conscious lying is usually accompanied by give-away non-verbal 'tells'.

On the other hand it can be profoundly painful for honest and empathic surgeons to know that they have made a mistake and to tell their patient about it. It is only human to try to avoid the admission both to yourself and to your patient. Politicians and safety experts might talk of enforcing 'the duty of candour' with the force of the criminal law when mistakes have occurred, but it shows little understanding of the complex



tangle of feelings and facts involved. The same considerations apply to surgical research – successful new treatments will often be dogged by failure and much patient suffering in their early stages. A certain remorseless detachment is required if the work is to proceed to success.

Finding this balance between professional detachment and compassion is, of course, central to the practice of medicine and is a problem all doctors must face. It is most easily demonstrated by the way in which most surgeons would find it impossible to operate on members of their own family (or even friends or colleagues), although the single most important ethic in medicine is that you should only treat patients as you would want yourself or your family to be treated. I know a few surgeons who – as far as I can tell – do not suffer at all when their patients' suffer, but they are probably in a minority. Most surgeons, though they do not care to admit it, suffer to some extent with their patients when

things have gone badly, although they probably feel more compassion towards some patients than others. Drug addicts, attempted suicides, psychiatric patients – people who are, mistakenly, considered to be responsible for their own misfortune – will elicit less sympathy than others. On the other hand treating medical colleagues – your own tribe – will often produce anxiety in the surgeon as well as sympathy.

Forcing surgeons to look down

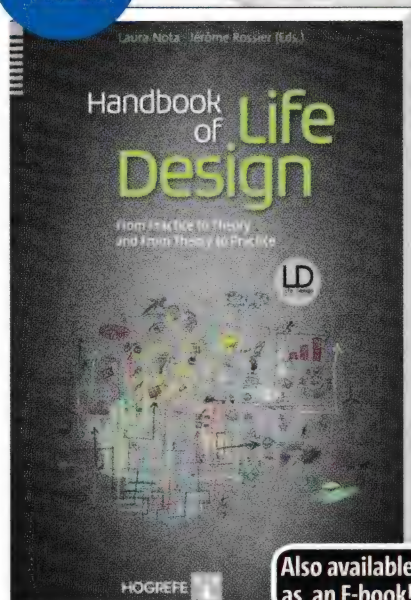
Can one teach wisdom, empathy and judgement? Can you force surgeons to look down? Will they just develop severe vertigo and learn nothing (just as the dancing mice in the Yerkes-Dodson experiments failed to learn if the electric shock was very strong)?

I have probably learned most from my own and my family's experiences of illness and health care, but when one is a young doctor such experiences are few and far between. Patients – at least in England – rarely complain or answer back, anxious not to displease the people upon whom their life depends, so it is surprisingly difficult to learn how to talk to patients, and how to make difficult decisions with them, because of this lack of negative feedback. I believe that much more is now taught in medical schools about practical psychology than when I was training, but students have no responsibility for patients and have not yet had to develop the self-deception and denial that is an important part of being a surgeon, which one must then struggle to overcome with experience.

Being an old doctor myself, close to retirement, I like to think that doctors get better with age. The importance of understanding psychology – one's own even more importantly than that of the patient – is probably something best shown by example rather than formally taught. This was perhaps easier in the days when surgery was still an apprenticeship and surgeons worked in small groups led by consultants known as 'firms' – many of the recent changes in postgraduate medical education and the shortened working hours have made this much more difficult, although not impossible. I have now retired from operating, but will continue to teach surgical trainees. I hope that I might be able to help them to understand themselves a little better, to understand psychology, and hence avoid making some of the mistakes that I have made in the past.

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Poetry competition

Our winning entry, from Lynne Cameron.
Image: *Go back to your room now*, Acrylic on paper.

This poem, by Lynne Cameron, wins *The Psychologist's* first ever poetry competition. Competition judge David Sutton (a published poet, as well as being the editor's father!) said: 'Lynne's poem stands out immediately as being an effective and affecting primary response to something seen and strongly felt, where the emotion is allowed to shape the poem without running away with it.'

Lynne describes poetry as a 'life companion'. She is now a practising artist, passionate about colour, language and imagination. Previously Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Open University and University of Leeds, she has published widely on metaphor and empathy.

Lynne told us: 'This poem complements a series of abstract expressionist paintings with the same title (<http://lynnecameron.com/index/#/enid>). My art and poetry come out of and respond to my emotions. The most intense emotions of the last few years were generated by my father's Lewy body dementia, and by my experiences as I watched it take away his sense of place, as we answered increasingly anxious phone calls from him lost in his own living room, and as I sat next to him on visits to the care home we had to move him into.

'The poem and the series of paintings that I call 'A Wonder World for Enid' emerged when these multiple, complicated emotions were brought into the studio. Enid was a frail old lady who lived across the corridor in the care home.

While it was still too hard, too raw, to make work directly relating to my father's last illness, re-imagining Enid allowed the possibility of poetry and painting through metonymy, appropriation and projection.

'In my paintings, tones and textures of greys on top of the colour layer work as a kind of 'inverse sculpting' by excluding and veiling. The bright shapes underneath and among the grey suggest the rich lives of people with dementia that are gradually obliterated, but remain accessible longer than we think. They reflect the moments that brightened my visits when we managed to connect across fading memories and anxiety.'

Dr Catherine Loveday, Chair of the Psychologist and Digest Editorial Advisory Committee, commented: 'This piece captures and powerfully expresses a unique perspective on the experience of dementia. It's food for thought for both practice and scientific understanding and a beautiful illustration of why science and art must sit together.'





Wonder World for Enid

Enid, these are for you.
My wish: that you had a wonder world in front of your paled eyes,
Scenes so wonderful that you felt,
Simply, joy.
Garden memories of warmth and song.
Children holding your strong hands.

Enid, these are for you,
Your care home room,
Unknowning and scared by your own mind.
I wish I could bring you a wonder world
To dissolve your fears and relax your bony shoulders.

Enid, these are for you.
As all I can do, from this side.
I hold the world for you and wish,
Enid, for you.

A Wonder World for Enid

Enid, these are for you.

My wish: that you had a wonder world in front of your paled eyes,
Scenes so wonderful that you felt,
simply, joy.

Garden memories of warmth and song.
Of children holding your strong hands.

Enid, these are for you,
In your care home room,
unknowing and scared by your own mind.
I wish I could bring you a wonder world
to dissolve your fears and relax your bony shoulders.

Enid, these are for you.
It's all I can do, from this side.
I hold the world for you and wish,
Enid, for you.

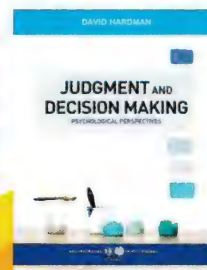
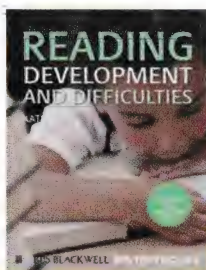
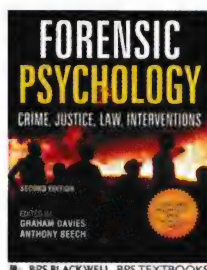
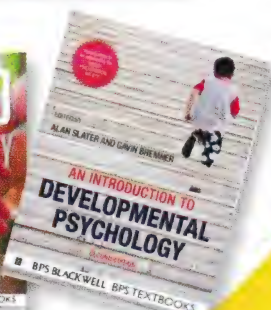
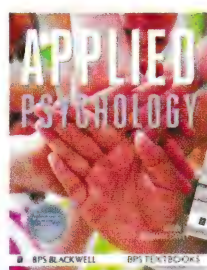
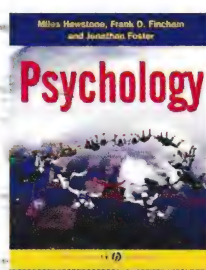
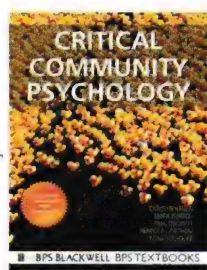
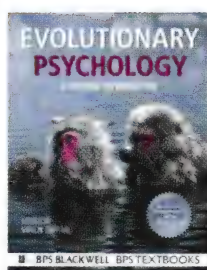
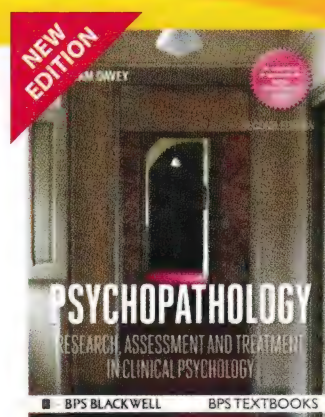
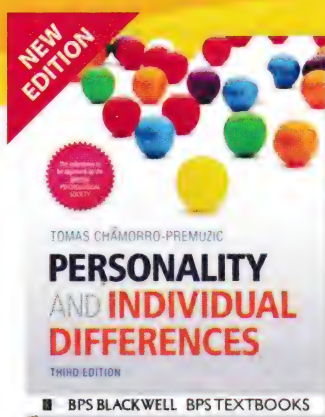
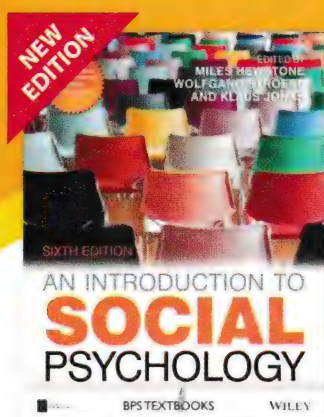
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Close up and interpersonal

Gail Kinman meets **Anna Machin** to discuss close relationships, fatherhood, and more

Your research focuses on close human social relationships, but you didn't originally train as a psychologist. What was your background?

I began my academic life doing a general anthropology degree, and I would still consider myself an anthropologist. My PhD was not on living things at all – I used archaeological records to explore the evolution of social and sexual behaviour in the Lower Palaeolithic period, about 500,000 years ago. I then moved to Oxford to work with Robin Dunbar, whose main focus is on relationships and social networks, and developed a strong interest in understanding how people operate in close dyadic relationships characterised by trust and obligation.

Anthropologists are magpies – we pinch ideas from other disciplines. I gradually started drawing on psychological theories, measures and techniques, as well as ideas emerging from other fields, such as neuroscience and biochemistry, to gain insight into how people develop attachments within a dyadic relationship and how these relationships are maintained over time. My research now covers several aspects of close human relationships – kinships systems, best friendships, romantic relationships and new fatherhood, as well as prosocial behaviour, attachment and bonding.

The importance of a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the human condition is gradually being recognised.

The only way you can study humanity is from a multidisciplinary perspective. In my cross-cultural work, I draw heavily on ethnographic techniques I learned during my training in anthropology. Having a wide range of experimental techniques to choose from also makes conducting research much more interesting. I keep my eyes open for new techniques arising from other disciplines that might be useful. Sometimes it is a steep learning curve, but ultimately it keeps things challenging.

You have a particular interest in the evolutionary origins of kinship. How did this develop?

Social anthropologists have written a great deal about why human kinship systems are different, but nobody had really explored why every culture in the world has a kinship system and why individuals adopt that kinship system and its descriptive terminology into their world view at a very young age. This must have conferred some evolutionary advantage, but what might this benefit be?

Our theory is that kinship systems reduce the cognitive load involved in maintaining close relationships. Reciprocity is what makes relationships endure – if you are in a relationship where you are always giving and the other person is always taking, it is likely to break down. But keeping track of the reciprocity is very cognitively demanding. You have to think 'When was the last time this person let me down? Have they ever lied to me, belittled me, abandoned me, etc?' Neuroimaging studies suggest that keeping track of reciprocity involves not only working memory, but also areas of the brain that influence social cognition. Moreover, relationship dilemmas are not like maths problems: people have to weigh many different possibilities, and there can be high costs if they get it wrong. We thought that the cognitive load involved in maintaining relationships may be reduced when people are dealing with kin. We already know that we are less likely to expect reciprocity from our kin, as helping somebody you are related to is beneficial for your genetic fitness. In other words, kinships confers a shortcut to trust, which reduces the cognitive load involved in deciding whether to help people or not. There is also a reputational effect where if you don't help your kin, the rest of your relatives will probably find out about it.

What sort of experiments do you conduct to examine these effects?

We present people with social problems or moral dilemmas involving kin and

non-kin and measure their response time. For example, you find out that your relative or your friend is leaving their 10-year-old child home alone. What do you do? Do you do nothing, do you confront them, or do you inform the appropriate authorities? We find that people respond much more quickly if the hypothetical person is a relative than a friend, supporting the view that such dilemmas involve considerably less cognitive processing.

We argue that the evolutionary advantage gained from the release in processing power from the reduced cognitive load conferred by the kinship schema has allowed us to expand our social network to the 150 individuals (made up of relatives and friends) that people typically have in their social networks today. We also have evidence that larger functioning social networks enhance the capacity for survival. People with more social capital recover better from chronic illness and have lower mortality rates.

You have also looked at genetic variation as a cause of difference in prosocial behaviour.

Yes, this research is ongoing. Previous studies showed that variations in genes relating to the production, transportation and operation of neurotransmitters, such as oxytocin, dopamine, serotonin and beta endorphin, influence the extent to which individuals instigate social relationships and how they behave in these relationships. Several studies show that the oxytocin receptor gene, in particular, is highly polymorphic, and that this is related to individual variation in empathy, altruism and emotional vulnerability. Beta endorphin is a naturally occurring opiate that appears to influence experiences of love and feelings of social acceptance. There is a version of the opioid receptor gene associated with beta endorphin, which has been labelled a 'gain of function' variant. People with this version of the gene tend to wear their heart on their sleeve; they fall in love very hard and tend to experience love passionately and euphorically. They also feel social rejection much more intensely and tend to have more powerful negative reactions when relationships break up. Interestingly, there are also differences at the cultural level – for example, the frequency with which versions of the oxytocin receptor gene are found in any population seems to be linked to whether countries are classified as collectivist or individualist. We are not saying that these relationships are deterministic – there is a major gene-environment interaction –

but it is another piece of the jigsaw. We are about to start on a large-scale study collecting genetic and psychological data to increase our understanding of the genes that might underpin individual variation in behaviour within and experiences of relationships.

You talk of 'single badge groups' in your research – what does this mean?

An element of similarity between people that might mimic a kinship relationship. If you meet someone and learn that they have something in common with you – for example, you might support the same football team, be members of the same political party, or both be psychologists – is this a short-cut to trust in the same way that a kin relationship would be? If we are presented with a moral dilemma, would we be more likely to help people that we perceive to be 'pseudo-kin' – members of the single badge group – than those we may feel we have no connection with? We haven't yet examined these issues experimentally but plan to do so in the future.

You've also researched how people select partners and best friends.

People choose romantic partners within a 'mating market': the most successful relationships are those where people mate with others of similar 'value' to themselves. Interestingly, although similarity may drive attraction initially, we have found that women tend to put their male partner on a bit of a pedestal. They will score him above themselves on a wide range of personal attributes such as physical attractiveness, sense of humour, kindness and intelligence. Unfortunately for women though, men also tend to rate themselves more highly than they do their female partners on these attributes. Men also differ in the way they see their romantic relationships; they don't tend to define themselves in terms of the success or failure of their love life, but this has a major influence on women's self-esteem and confidence. In terms of 'best' friendships, we have found that people are more similar to their closest friend than they are to their romantic partner. Both men and women also tend to be more intimate with their best friends than their partner and are more likely to disclose emotional vulnerability. We found this effect in cross-gender as well as same-gender best friendships, supporting the view that male/female friendships are not a 'proxy' for romantic relationships.

Your work on the development of the

bond between new fathers and their babies sounds novel.

In collaboration with the National Childbirth Trust, I conducted a study looking at 15 first-time fathers to examine the bonding process. I followed the fathers from seven months gestation until the baby was six months old. Nowadays, healthcare and the media promote an idealised view of 'involved' and 'hands-on' fatherhood and I wanted to explore the realities of their bonding experiences and



Anna Machin, Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford (anna.machin@psy.ox.ac.uk)

their role transition in general. Our findings suggested that, in relation to fatherhood, men are where women were in the 1980s: they are told 'you can have it all' and then 'suddenly discover they can't without experiencing a considerable negative impact on their physical and mental wellbeing. Our fathers tended to shun the traditional authoritarian qualities associated with fatherhood, such as being the financial provider and administering discipline, and strongly endorse being involved with the baby's practical care and emotional development. Sadly, their high expectations were not realised – this led to feelings of guilt, deep disappointment and emotional pressure engendered by trying to juggle different elements of their life without any support.

Few men are taking up the option of extended paternity leave, and some studies show that employers and colleagues see those that do so as less

committed to the organisation and less worthy of promotion.

Exactly. It isn't enough for policies to pay lip service to the importance of fathering. Childbirth tends to occur at times in men's lives when they are building a career – they feel they have a lot to lose if they neglect their work. During paternity leave, fathers have been given a glimpse of 'baby world' and felt really involved and empowered, but then had to return to a very different role where they may only see the baby for an hour a day. Also, the fathers were deeply worried that they didn't immediately experience bonding and the great flash of deep, warm, wonderful love. It was only when the baby became less reliant on the mother that bonding with the father started to occur... for many, this took a long time.

Fathers want their voices heard. I was surprised that I had no problems recruiting men for this study – in fact it was massively oversubscribed. Hopefully, the growing evidence for the importance of the father's input into development will increase resources and change attitudes so that men can be helped through the transition to fatherhood and be deeply involved in their children's lives.

I know you're keen for your research to have real impact. How can your findings improve the quality of relationships?

Dysfunctional relationships have a major cost economically and socially, across generations. For example, people brought up in a dysfunctional parenting relationship are much more likely to have mental health problems and addictions and to perform antisocial acts. We need to understand what makes a relationship functional and healthy, as well as maladaptive. That is why I feel the work I am doing with parents is so important – you need to get in as early as possible. We know that touching, holding and stroking babies and maintaining eye contact promotes the growth of the areas of the brain that are involved in enhancing bonds, which, in turn, helps them build functional social relationships when they are older. We also know that adolescence is a time where we get a second chance to intervene and hopefully reverse any damage that may have been done. The power of interdisciplinary research is that understanding gained at the neurochemical, genetic and behavioural level will help us develop effective interventions to reduce risks and enhance the quality of interpersonal relationships at all ages.

Deception – understanding lies with collaboration

Emma Williams with the latest in our series for budding writers (see www.bps.org.uk/newvoices for more information)

Like most other psychology students, I regularly encountered the question 'Can you read my mind?' during my undergraduate years. When I started a PhD in the area of lie detection, this was soon replaced with 'Can you tell if I'm lying...?'. Although I would have loved to impress my friends and family with my super-human lie-detection skills, unfortunately all I could offer in response was a discussion of the variable findings in this complex research field, much to their disappointment!

My PhD research at Cardiff University, focused on two main areas of deception research. The first was an exploration of the cognitive processes involved in telling a lie, whilst the second explored potential individual differences in the ability to detect deception. Although my PhD work focused on observable behaviour and interactions, as my research career has progressed I have become increasingly interested in the influence of social media on deceptive communication.

Unlike more traditional forms of social communication and interaction, social media provides a means for individuals to create, modify and exchange information across virtual networks and communities, thereby allowing interaction between people who may have never met before and who have no prior knowledge of each other (Kietzmann & Hermkens, 2011). Although this capability provides significant benefits to society, it also has the capacity to be used to achieve more damaging ends: the media regularly

highlight the role that social media and online communications have played in the recruitment of terrorists, the 'grooming' of children by paedophiles, and cyber-bullying.

Social media offers those bent on deception a number of advantages over and above face-to-face communication. Although not explicitly focused on deception processes, an interpersonal communication theory known as the hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996) highlights how individuals can strategically edit information in order to aid self-presentation in online environments:

In face-to-face communication, we can choose what information to share to a certain extent, but there is much greater potential to do this online. For example, a lack of physical verification may make it difficult to determine whether an individual's stated age, sex or other physical characteristics are indeed true.

When communicating across social media, there are fewer contextual cues available to receivers to aid in the processing and judgement of presented information. Online relationships that occur based on common interests or group solidarity can result in receivers idealising the persona of the sender and considering all of their messages in relation to this idealised view (i.e. potentially in a more positive or honest light).

Senders have longer to edit and

consider messages. Since telling lies is considered more cognitively challenging than telling the truth, with findings of longer response times to questions for liars (Walczyk et al., 2003), this is particularly relevant to deceptive communication.

The lack of nonverbal cues found in the majority of online environments may also increase the difficulty of trying to differentiate honest from deceptive communicators, as highlighted by both social presence theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) and media richness theory (Short et al., 1976).

Given the potential ease of online deception and its possible consequences, it is increasingly important to understand these processes. Although research has examined potential differences in deceptive behaviour across different media (i.e. potential differences across computer-mediated communications compared with face-to-face communications: Lewis & George, 2008), there is still considerable work to be done to keep up with the continually changing nature of online environments and interactions.

To date, deception in online dating sites and within e-commerce settings has received particular attention in the research literature, with findings demonstrating the prevalence of strategic and carefully considered deception in these environments (Ellison et al., 2006). In online dating, message senders have been found to carefully consider the potential impact and interpretation of the information and cues that they present and apply the same consideration to subtle cues that may be present in the profiles and messages of others (Ellison et al., 2006). Online dating profiles in particular provide an interesting research area for the deception field, since individuals may be more likely to construct exaggerated or less-than-truthful presentations of themselves to appear more desirable and attractive. This

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is supported by findings that online daters who are considered less attractive are more likely to lie about their physical characteristics and to enhance their profile photos (Toma & Hancock, 2010). The relationship between attractiveness and deception is found only in relation to physical characteristics however, and does not seem to extend to factors such as occupation or income. Due to the potential for future face-to-face meetings to take place in such contexts, these deceptive self-enhancements are likely to be only minor deviations from the truth rather than all-out lies (Toma et al., 2008).

The extent of such deceptive presentations may also be influenced by factors related to the design of online dating web pages. The types of profile questions, the required content, any verification requirements, and the ease with which the profile can be altered or creatively composed all potentially affect the likelihood and ease with which deceptive strategies are used (Toma & Hancock, 2010). Within e-commerce settings, information presentation, information content and information generation can all be manipulated by product sellers to deceive receivers in order to influence their product choices (Xiao & Benbasat, 2011). For instance, visualisations or designs that distract attention can be used during message processing to impact the extent to which particular information may be actively considered or neglected by potential customers (Aditya, 2001).

Research has also examined potential individual differences in the extent that deceptive behaviour is displayed in online environments. Frequent users of online forums and discussion groups have been found to deceive more than infrequent

users, and younger users have been found to deceive more than older users (Caspi & Gorsky, 2006). However, unlike traditional deceptive communication, deception in online environments does not appear to generate the negative emotions, such as guilt, fear or shame that have been found to accompany face-to-face interactions. This suggests an altered form of ethical judgement or differing social norms in such circumstances

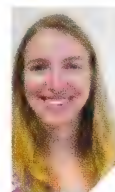
scientists, psychologists and economists. The project is exploring the fundamental processes of deception in online interactions and the means through which such deceptions can be deterred using game paradigms. For example, participants may play games against other players who could be computerised, anonymous, socially connected or partly identifiable, and manipulations include the extent that such players are able to cheat and punish.

Since finishing my PhD in 2012, I have increasingly appreciated the benefits of multidisciplinary working in order to address current issues, such as online deception, within society. Rather than remaining within academic research communities, I have taken research positions within both public and private sector organisations focused on human factors and behaviour change, including as a behavioural scientist within the Human

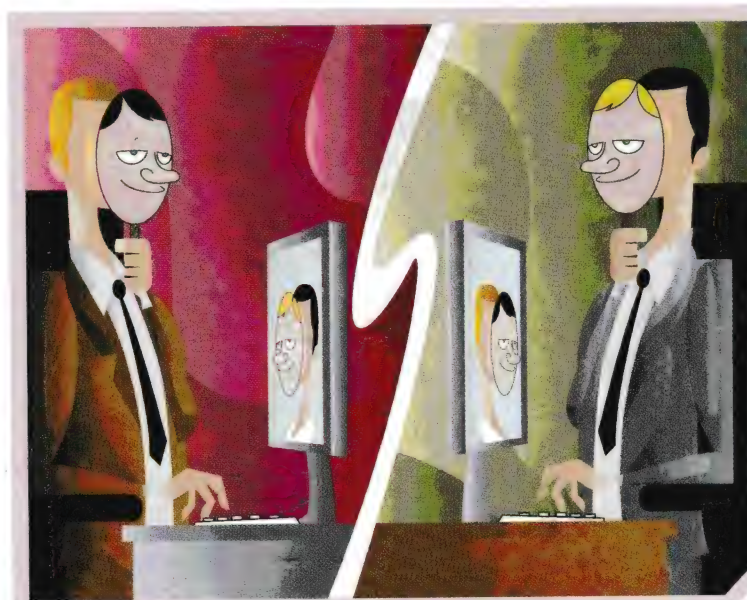
Factors Capability at BAE Systems Advanced Technology Centre. This has allowed me to work with

members of several disciplines, including historians, anthropologists, computer scientists and engineers, and as a result my approach to psychological research has evolved considerably – in terms of the research designs and approaches that are taken, how findings are communicated, and the overall aims and scoping of projects.

Psychology has a tremendous contribution to make to current issues across a wide spectrum of industries and communities – the deception field is just one example. I hope to continue to participate in this journey through the development and conduct of research that attempts to bridge the infamous 'academic-practitioner divide'.



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Social media offers those bent on deception a number of advantages over and above face-to-face communication

(Cromwell et al., 2005). Social media environments can be considered a relatively new communication method: considering the anonymity and resultant ease with which profiles and actions may be 'deleted' or 'disassociated' from actual individuals, deceptive strategies online may present a very different phenomenon to traditional deception approaches until such behaviour is seen to have an observable consequence outside of a virtual community (which an individual may easily remove themselves from).

In my academic career so far, I have been happy to ride a wave of interest in online deception, which looks to explain such processes in terms of related theories of communication and behaviour in order to develop pragmatic detection or intervention strategies. This interest is reflected in recent multidisciplinary projects, such as the deterrence of deception in socio-technical systems, which is a collaboration between Cambridge, Newcastle and Portsmouth Universities and UCL, involving computer

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Building confidence in confidence intervals

Graham D. Smith and Peter E. Morris encourage you to rely less on significance tests

'If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking.

Richard Buckminster Fuller

Statistics are tools to aid thinking. But a misused thinking tool can mislead.

We psychologists are frequently misled by statistics, albeit unwittingly (e.g. Coulson et al., 2010; Hoekstra et al., 2014). These misunderstandings contribute to a major problem where many effects reported in our journals cannot be replicated (Ioannidis, 2005; Kühnberger et al., 2014).

This article aims to help readers reach sound conclusions about data, use better tools for the job and avoid some common misunderstandings. We encourage you to rely much more on confidence intervals and less on significance tests. If you do, then you will see research findings in a new light, enriching your understanding of psychological evidence.

We start by exploring some of the pitfalls of significance testing. Next, we introduce an alternative approach to inferential statistics based on confidence intervals of effect size. Then we give a series of examples demonstrating that this alternative approach is more revealing than significance testing. Finally, we reflect on why confidence intervals may have been overlooked.

Towards sharper tools

It is said that bad workers blame their tools, but it is worse to misuse them; like holding a cricket bat back-to-front, or knitting a cardigan using a pair of screwdrivers! Significance tests (i.e. statistical procedures that generate *p* values) are almost ubiquitous in quantitative psychology. Yet these tools are frequently misused. *P* values are sometimes taken to be: (i) a valid estimate of the magnitude of effects; (ii) the probability that the null hypothesis is true; (iii) the probability of replicating a result; or (iv) an indication of the theoretical or practical significance of results. Yet each of these interpretations is false (Nickerson, 2000). Typically, significance testing is used to determine the probability of obtaining the observed effect if a null hypothesis of zero difference or zero correlation were true. More useful non-null hypotheses can be employed but in practice rarely are. Many statistically savvy commentators, journal editors and psychological societies have concluded that we ought not to depend so heavily upon significance testing (APA, 2010; Cohen, 1994; Cumming, 2014; Nickerson, 2000).

Psychologists need to employ more ergonomic statistical tools; ones that are not so easily misused or misinterpreted. Confidence intervals (CIs) are the statistical equivalent of the ratchet screwdriver and the non-stick frying pan. Like significance testing, CIs are inferential statistics in that they enable us

to draw conclusions regarding hypotheses about populations. However, they help compensate for our limited abilities so that we avoid many of the mistakes that significance tests encourage (Coulson et al., 2010).

How does one use CIs to evaluate a potential solution to an applied problem, or to test the prediction of a theory? Here is a two-step quick-start guide.

Step 1: Calculate a point estimate of the population effect size.

To evaluate a hypothesis the magnitude and direction of an effect must be quantified. The effect might simply be the difference between two means. Or the mean difference could be standardised by dividing it by the scores' pooled standard deviation (SD), yielding Cohen's *d*. Pearson's correlation coefficient is an effect-size measure of the relationship between two variables. There are many other effect-size measures designed for a host of situations (see Fritz et al., 2012; Morris & Fritz, 2013b).

An effect size is not just a useful description of a sample; it guides us to conclusions about the population from which the sample is drawn. Many effect-size measures are designed to give unbiased point estimates of the true size of the effect in the population. In other words, the sample's effect size tells us the most plausible value of the population's effect size.

Step 2: Calculate the likely range of the population effect size.

Whilst a point estimate of the population effect size is useful, we need to remember that the actual population effect size could be among a range of values either side of the sample effect size. It is less and less plausible that the population effect size is at values farther and farther away. The distribution of plausibility (i.e. relative likelihood) of various values of the population effect size, under the parametric assumptions, is shown in Figure 1.

It would be useful to know how far

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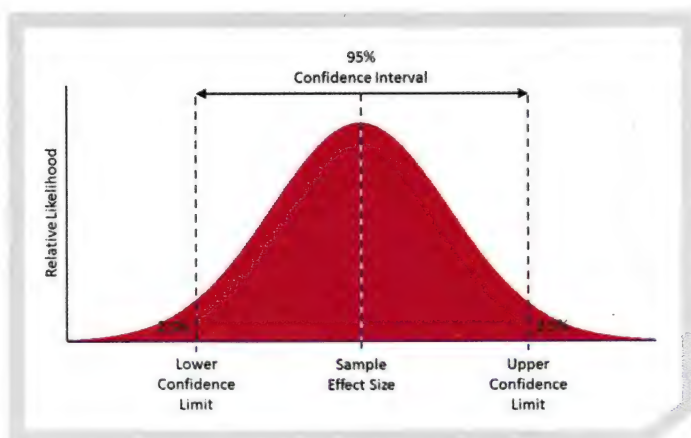


Figure 1. The plausibility of potential locations of the (unknown) population effect size. The most plausible value of the population effect size is the same as the sample effect size. It is very likely that the 95 per cent confidence interval has captured the population effect size, but not certain.

away from the population effect size the point estimate might plausibly be. What range encompasses 95 per cent of the most likely effect size values? This is just what a 95 per cent CI tells us. It helps us to visualise the distribution of plausibility among potential population effect sizes. A value near the sample effect size is about seven times more plausible than a value close to the 95 per cent confidence limits (Cumming, 2012). Only rarely (5 per cent of the time for 95 per cent CIs) will the CI turn out not to have captured the population effect size. CIs indicate the precision of estimates of effects.

Together, point and interval estimates of population effect sizes allow us to draw conclusions about almost any research question. There are CIs for nearly every situation that there are tests of significance (see Altman et al., 2000; Fidler & Loftus, 2009; Newcombe, 2013). The CI methods described later require the parametric assumptions but non-parametric CIs exist too.

CIs deal directly with research hypotheses in that they allow hypotheses about the many potential values of an

tangential to the research hypothesis. Multiple significant tests with different null hypotheses would be required to match the versatility of CIs. Furthermore, CIs ensure proper attention is paid to the magnitude of effects and thereby discourage many misinterpretations that are promoted by significance testing.

Now, let us build confidence in CIs through a series of examples of their interpretation, compared with conclusions from significance testing. We have chosen to use imaginary data for some of the examples. This is not because real examples are rare, but because we do not want to imply criticism of the few authors that we might select.

Statistically significant yet negligible

In his meta-analysis of personality variables and academic achievement, Poropat (2009) found statistically significant correlations (both p values were $< .001$) between academic achievement and both extraversion and stability. Described solely in terms of statistical significance, this sounds as if

effect to be evaluated together (Cumming, 2012). From a single CI, one can know whether the plausible range of effect sizes includes negligible, small, large, positive, negative and humongous values. A single significance test invites a conclusion about only one null hypothesis that typically is

there are important relationships between academic achievement and these two personality dimensions. Maybe this should be being taken into account by universities in their selection and treatment of students? However, Poropat was not misled by the significant p values, because the correlation coefficients of extraversion and stability with academic achievement that he found were $-.01$ and $.01$ respectively. If we estimate, by squaring the correlations, the variance of academic achievement predicted by extraversion or stability we see in each case the figure is only 0.01 per cent. The correlations may be statistically significant but the relationships are virtually non-existent. They are significant not because the effects are substantial but because the meta-analysis has accumulated sample sizes of over 59,000. If a sample is large enough then even the most trivial effects are statistically significant (Nickerson, 2000). Poropat rightly overlooked the p values and drew conclusions from effect sizes. Furthermore, we calculate the 95 per cent CIs for the correlations of academic achievement with extraversion and stability to range between $.00$ and $-.02$, or $.00$ and $.02$ respectively. In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that the actual population values for these correlations are negligibly tiny.

Significance testing cannot give grounds for believing a null hypothesis, partly because absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Furthermore, non-significant results do not imply that observed effects are negligible, as this can equally arise through low power. Yet, CIs can demonstrate that, under certain conditions, even a significant effect is so small as to be not worthy of our attention.

Statistically significant yet potentially not substantial

We have just seen how the range of likely values indicated by the CIs is very small if the sample size is very large. However, with the sort of sample size common in

General, 141, 2–18.

Grissom, R.J. & Kim, J.J. (2011). *Effect sizes for research: A broad practical approach* (2nd edn). New York: Psychology Press.

Hoekstra, R., Finch, S., Hiers, H.A.L. & Johnson, A. (2006). Probability as certainty: Dichotomous thinking and the misuse of p values. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 13(6), 1033–1037.

Hoekstra, R., Morey, R.D., Rouders, J.N. &

Wagenmakers, E.J. (2014). Robust misinterpretation of confidence intervals. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 21(5), 1157–1164. doi:10.3758/s13423-013-0572-3.

Ioannidis, J.P.A. (2005). Why most published research findings are false. *PLoS Medicine*, 2(8), e124. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124.

Kühberger, A., Fritz, A. & Scherndl, T. (2014). Publication bias in psychology.

PLoS ONE, 9(9).

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0105825.

Morris, P.E. & Fritz, C.O. (2013a). Effect sizes in memory research. *Memory*, 21(7), 832–842.

Morris, P.E. & Fritz, C.O. (2013b). Why are effect sizes still neglected? *The Psychologist*, 26, 580–583.

Morris, P.E. & Fritz, C.O. (2014). *The challenge of the Psychonomic Society guidelines on statistical issues* (2012).

Poster presented at the Psychonomic Society Annual Conference, Long Beach, California.

Morris, P.E., Fritz, C.O. & Buck, S. (2004). The name game: Acceptability, bonus information and group size. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 18, 89–104.

Newcombe, R.G. (2013). *Confidence intervals for proportions and related measures of effect size*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

many experiments, the CI of even a significant population effect may be quite wide. Typically, researchers fail to avail themselves of this useful and sobering extra information. For example, one of us co-authored a paper (Morris et al., 2004) reporting an experiment in which participants played two versions of a game intended to promote recall of people's names. The elaborate name game was rated as being significantly more fun to play than the simple name game; $t(214) = 1.79$, $p = .04$ (one-tailed). This finding was taken as support for a minor prediction.

However, secondary analysis using the CI of an effect size goes beyond the p value. Cohen's d , calculated from t and the sample size (Fritz et al., 2012), is 0.24. This can be referred to as a small effect (Cohen, 1988) although categorising effect sizes ought to be undertaken with caution (see Morris & Fritz, 2013a). A one-tailed 90 per cent CI of d is consistent with the finding of a significant difference. However, suppose we were instead interested in the range within which the population mean for this comparison might lie if there were no prediction. Cumming's (2012) ESCI software indicates that the 95 per cent CI of d is -0.04 to 0.52 . In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that the population effect size is somewhere between a negligible effect and a medium-sized positive effect. Only further research with much larger samples and possibly tighter control of variance in the design can answer whether Cohen's d really is substantial.

Fortunately, this particular comparison was not central to the conclusions of the paper, but it does illustrate how CIs can lead researchers to more appropriately nuanced conclusions about significant results. Any effect size must always be interpreted in terms of its practical importance. For example, a

small effect size can still be a valuable discovery when it relates to life and death health issues.

Not statistically significant yet potentially substantial

Imagine your research compares the language development of girls and boys. You find that a sample of 16 girls ($M = 57.6$, $SD = 21.4$) scored higher than a sample of 16 boys ($M = 46.7$, $SD = 18.5$) on a measure of verbal fluency. But an independent measures t test shows the difference is not significant, $t(30) = 1.54$, $p = .13$.

What should you conclude? You might be tempted to infer that the null hypothesis is probably true. Concluding that a null hypothesis is likely to be true because an effect is not statistically significant is a mistake frequently seen in the

literature (Hoekstra et al., 2006).

So perhaps you would drop this line of inquiry and try something else with a better chance of being successful. Would you consider a p value of .13 close enough to the .05 criterion to justify the time and cost of collecting more data? On its own, the p value does not give you the information to decide. But a CI does.

The mean difference of girls' and boys' verbal fluency scores ($M = 10.9$) translates to a Cohen's d of 0.56. The 95 per cent CI of Cohen's d , calculated from d and the sample sizes (Cumming, 2012; Grissom & Kim, 2011), is -0.14 to 1.27 . Towards the lower limit, the population d could plausibly be between a very small negative value and negligible positive value, consistent with the finding of non-significance. But it would be wrong to discount the effect because of the possibility that it is negligibly small. Remember both extremes are equally likely. Towards the upper limit, the true population effect could just as easily be large or very large (Cohen's d of 1.27 accounts for 30 per cent of variance; Fritz et al., 2012). We may not have precise enough an estimate of the population effect size to justify publication, yet we ought not to assume that the effect is negligible when it is much more plausibly medium-sized, large or very large. It is well worth attempting replication with a larger sample. The p value was in danger of encouraging us to abandon a potentially exciting line of inquiry.

Contradictory yet consistent?

Imagine two articles that report essentially

the same independent measures experiment replicated by different researchers. The difference of means in Study A is 13.9 ($SD = 20.0$), $t(38) = 2.20$, $p = .03$. The difference of means in Study B is 9.1 ($SD = 21.1$), $t(28) = 1.18$, $p = .25$.

Are the findings consistent or contradictory? In one study the difference is statistically significant but in the other study it is not. Would you conclude that the findings are inconsistent? Might you then carefully examine the articles for methodological differences to explain the outcomes?

Perhaps you are being tempted into a mistake. Significance testing encourages misleading black-and-white thinking (Hoekstra et al., 2006; Nickerson, 2000). Statistical significance and non-significance do not equate to the existence and non-existence of an effect. A significant effect is not necessarily significantly greater than a non-significant effect (Baguley, 2012). Ought you to conclude that the findings complement each other? On their own, the p values cannot help you decide.

A clearer picture emerges when we look at CIs. The CI of the (unstandardised) difference of means is calculated easily from means, SDs and sample sizes (e.g. Altman et al., 2000). The 95 per cent CI for Study A is 1.11 to 26.71 and for Study B is -6.71 to 24.91. These intervals are largely overlapping, so it is quite plausible that there is little difference in the true size of effect in the two studies.

But do they overlap enough? It seems so. A meta-analysis combining the two studies using Cumming's (2012) ESCI software reveals the 95 per cent CI is 2.38 to 21.56 and the p value associated with the null hypothesis of zero difference is .01. You may be surprised that this p value is less than either of the p values of the original studies. However, this surprise would be misplaced; the evidence for statistical significance is accumulated because the study findings are largely consistent and the sample size is cumulative.

Using and misusing CIs

Sadly, few empirical articles report CIs and even fewer interpret the CIs they report. Morris and Fritz (2014) found that only 11 per cent of the 463 empirical papers published by the Psychonomic Society's journals in 2013 reported CIs, and very few interpreted these CIs.

Looking back through the last five years of the *British Journal of Psychology* we can find only one article that puts CIs at the heart of the analysis and

"Significance testing encourages misleading black-and-white thinking"

Nickerson, R.S. (2000). Null hypothesis significance testing. *Psychological Methods*, 5, 241–301.

Poropat, A.E. (2009). A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(2), 322–338.

interpretation: Armitage and Talibudeen (2010). They report the mean difference in acceptance of a safe-sex message between an attitude-change intervention and a control was 0.82, 95 per cent CI [0.57, 1.07]. Had they merely stated the means and a p value then we would not know how small or large the difference could plausibly be. For all we would have known, the population difference in message acceptance could just as easily have been somewhere between 0.07 and 1.57, a much less impressive finding. The authors also tell us that Cohen's d for the effect is 0.77. Were they preparing the paper today they could have used Cumming's (2012) ESCI to determine the CI of d . Our secondary analysis of their results suggest that the effect in the population is likely to be between medium and large; 95 per cent CI [0.48, 1.06]. This suggests that the change in attitude is not just potentially greater than zero, it is substantial. One might be able to make a case for the effect being large enough to make a practical difference in safe-sex behaviour.

If CIs are superior to significance testing, why are they reported so infrequently? It would be wrong to

conclude from this neglect that CIs are not superior after all. Here are several potential explanations. First, psychologists may not know enough about CIs to realise their usefulness; the basics are not widely known. Many mistakenly believe that CIs are merely descriptive statistics, and even experienced researchers are unaware that CIs exist for Pearson's r and Cohen's d . Few statistical textbooks and statistical packages do sufficient justice to the CI approach. Second, one ought not to underestimate the normative influence of the literature. Results reporting may be a matter of habit. The lack of good examples such as Armitage and Talibudeen (2010) may mean that researchers fail to consider using CIs. A third reason why CIs may not be reported is that they often reveal a very wide range within which the population values may lie (Cohen, 1994). It is uncomfortable to be reminded of the imprecision of one's data, but trying to ignore that imprecision will not make it go away.

Although CIs are better tools than significance tests, they are not foolproof. Hoekstra and colleagues (2014) recently reported that experienced researchers

hold misunderstandings about CIs. However, the misunderstandings may be due to lack of familiarity. Coulson and others (2010) found that because psychologists are relatively unfamiliar with CIs they frequently reinterpret them as two-tailed significance tests, by observing whether or not zero is captured within the interval. There is little point in merely using CIs in this way – it leads to the same conclusions as conventional significance testing. CIs, when interpreted appropriately, yield richer conclusions than significance tests; more nuanced and possibly in contradiction.

To see the real utility of CIs we need to go beyond the significance testing mindset. Only then will we beam new light on research findings. So take these powerful thinking tools out the box and give them a go!

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Graham.Smith@northampton.ac.uk

Peter E. Morris is Emeritus Professor at the University of Lancaster and Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of Northampton



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Your submission will be considered by the Editorial Advisory Group (Chair: Professor Andy Tolmie), who will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

*Submissions should be sent to: Professor Andy Tolmie,
c/o Lynn West, The British Psychological Society, St Andrews
House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR.
Informal enquiries can be made via Lynn.West@bps.org.uk
and will be directed to Professor Tolmie.
The deadline for submissions is **17 July 2015**.*

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Mary Cullinane, Training Co-ordinator.
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The Society has offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London, as well as the main office in Leicester. All enquiries should be addressed to the Leicester office (see inside front cover for address).

The British Psychological Society

was founded in 1901, and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its object is 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge'.

Extract from The Charter



President's column

Jamie Hacker Hughes

Contact Jamie Hacker Hughes via the Society's Leicester office, or e-mail: presidentmiell@bps.org.uk

This is very strange for me to write as my first column as your new Society President. At the time of writing, Professor Dorothy Miell is still serving the final few weeks of her presidency, the team of Trustees that I have been working with over the past year as President Elect (a year, by the way, which I have found to have been incredibly helpful and insightful, but more of that later) is still intact and the BPS colonisation of the ACC in Liverpool for the 2015 Annual Conference is all still yet to happen. We will not yet have heard Professor Sir Cary Cooper's keynote address, nor Professor Miell's Presidential Address, nor that after dinner speech by the Reverend Richard Coles (of *Saturday Live* and *Communards* fame) following the gala dinner in that iconic venue by the quayside in Liverpool docks.

But all these things have indeed now come to pass as you read this and so it is now time to express some heartfelt thanks and to say some goodbyes. The first thanks must go to my predecessor, Professor Dorothy Miell, who has just come to the end of her term as the Society's 80th president. Dot has been a very steady and firm hand at the Society's wheel and under her guidance, first as President Elect and then as President, she has presided over the introduction of the Society's new strategic plan and has also overseen a number of important reviews, including a review of the way in which the BPS exercises its governance. I am delighted that Professor Miell now moves into the role of the Vice President and I look forward to her sage and accessible advice being afforded to Professor Peter Kinderman, our new President Elect, and myself over the coming year.

As we welcome Peter into his new role, however, it is also time for us to say farewell to a number of Trustees who have now left the Board, many after a very considerable length of service to the Society. Dr Richard Mallows has just ended his term as Vice President and has

served as one of our honorary officers since 2008, first as Honorary Treasurer, then as President Elect and then as President before his most recent role. Professor Pam Maras has stepped down after five years as Honorary General Secretary, the first of these in a dual role with her final year on the Presidential Team, to be succeeded by Professor Carole Allan, also previously a President. Dr Gerry Mulhern ends three years as a Trustee, having

been on the Presidential Team before that, and Professor Ken Brown ends over 10 years' service to the Board, including a term as Honorary Treasurer, then serving as President and Vice President and finally two terms as a Trustee, Dr Lyndsey Moon and Dr Gene Johnson also step down after two terms each as Trustees, in addition to a number of other Society roles.

Finally, Professor Judi Ellis ends two terms as Chair of the Research Board to be succeeded by Professor Daryl O'Connor. May I say a very sincere thank you, on

behalf of all in the Society, to them all and we wish them well for the future. In their place we welcome Peter, Carole and our three new Trustees, Dr Abigail Locke, Dr Chris Lynch and Dr Lindsay O'Dell to the Board. We expect great things of them all, and I know that we shall not be disappointed.

This is an extremely exciting time to be your Society President. We are in the midst of a wide second consultation on the review of our member networks, which we launched at the society's AGM at Annual Conference. The consultation is now in progress and remains open for all your comments until 6 July. Please, if you have not responded already, may I urge you to do so now. I should like members' response to this consultation on the future organisation of our Society, which will so much determine our future contribution to our work and life outside it, to far outstrip the turnout at this year's General Election. Please tell all your colleagues about it. To participate,



Dot has been a very steady and firm hand at the Society's wheel

if you have not already done so, go to the member network review webpage (www.bps.org.uk/membernetnetworkreview).

Please give us your input now, and please share the link as widely as you can with fellow psychologists, especially those who are not currently members of our Society. Thank you. I shall be reporting on the progress of this most important set of changes as they are considered, decided upon and implemented month by month.

My priorities over the coming year as your new President are to work towards achieving a higher profile for our profession, a stronger voice for psychology, and greater influence and impact on policy and practice locally, nationally across our four nations and internationally, and to seek to achieve better access, equality and transparency both into and across our Society. In other words, seeking to build our profile, our voice, our influence and our organisation so that we may continue to develop and grow as we go into the future.

As part of this vision, the editor of *The Psychologist*, Dr Jon Sutton, has been receptive to my ideas around themed content for topics of personal interest to me which also demonstrate the policy impact of psychology. This month's related article is from Angela Carter, on youth unemployment, to tie in with my focus on homelessness, unemployment and social justice. The themes for July are Sport and Exercise, Physical and Mental Health and, for August, Languages and Culture, Cognition, Travel, and Aviation. We are planning to put the full programme on the website, with other information, in a newly created 'President tab' on the website as soon as we can make this available. We shall be reinforcing these themes through our press releases, and I would also encourage member networks to echo them around the country wherever possible. I am now encouraging member networks to nominate members who are subject matter experts in any of these areas, and skilled communicators, to join me in a 'President's Panel', telling everyone about the fantastic work that psychology and psychologists are doing.

To contact me about this, or anything else, e-mail presidentsoffice@bps.org.uk or find me on Twitter as @profjamiehh. I shall also be writing a weekly blog which will be posted on the website and, when I am tweeting as President, my tweets will always carry a #BPSPresident hashtag.

I am now really looking forward to working with you, with all the Trustees and my colleagues on the Presidential Team, and I feel extremely privileged that you have trusted in me to become your new President. Together, we can.

REVIEW OF MEMBER NETWORKS

The Society has launched a consultation on options for the future structure of our organisation. This is part of the work to implement the Society's strategic plan 2015-2020. The options centre on how we organise our 39 separate member networks.

Three options are being considered: the Original Structure; an Academy of Psychological Science and College of Psychological Practice; and a College of Psychology.

Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, President, said: 'Our networks are important, helping us to provide a range of services for our members. However, the current structure doesn't always work as well as it should and can often create barriers to joint working and communication. Sometimes this stands in the way of our Society being as effective as it might be.'

The Trustees set up a small working party to carry out this review and report back with recommendations. The second phase of consultation runs to 6 July.

I To read more and take part, see www.bps.org.uk/membernetnetworkreview

Making sense of crime

The Society has contributed to a report warning that sweeping claims about crime made in the general election manifestos of the UK's political parties are nearly always wrong.

Making Sense of Crime, a guide published by Sense About Science, sets out why such generalisations are misleading (see <http://www.senseaboutscience.org/resources.php/182/making-sense-of-crime>). They wrongly assume crime is a single phenomenon to be addressed by headline-grabbing measures and they ignore evidence on what works and what doesn't in reducing different types of crime. In the guide, experts in violent crime, policing, crime science, psychology and the media's reporting of crime share insights from this evidence, which contradict many election promises.

The insights include that most types of crime are falling across developed countries and have been for around 25 years, so individual policies don't have a big effect; the most effective ways to cut crime might lie

outside the criminal justice system; crime isn't caused by a single factor such as unemployment, poverty, bad parenting, government cuts or influences such as video games; 'criminals' aren't a separate group from the rest of society; and police statistics are not the best way to judge crime rates.

Sense About Science is encouraging people to use its new 'crime exaggeration checklist,' published alongside the guide, to spot misleading statements on crime by politicians, commentators and think tanks.

Professor Daryl O'Connor, Chair of the Society's Research Board, said: 'It is essential that policy making in all areas should be based on reliable, robust evidence. *Making Sense of Crime* not only challenges policy makers to ensure that policies are made on the basis of the very best available evidence, but also to not be afraid to admit when mistakes are made or when the evidence is not as reliable as it could be. In addition, there is a responsibility on the media to ensure that its reporting is not sensationalist and



alarmist but is a factual and accurate representation of the issue, whether it be rising or falling crime, police effectiveness or the impact of custodial sentences.'

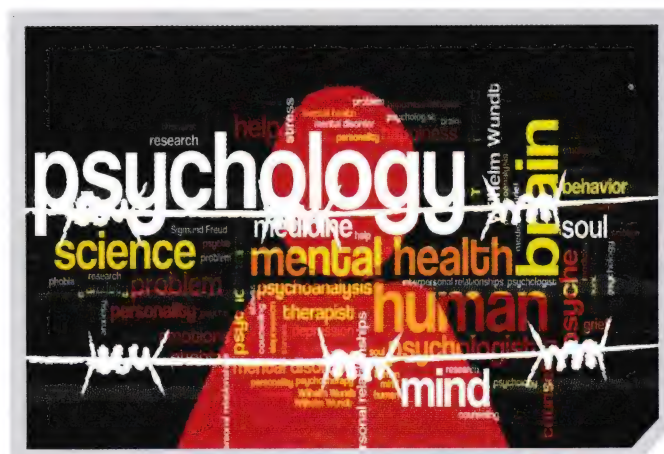
Prateek Buch, director of the Evidence Matters campaign at Sense About Science, said: 'Politicians of all stripes, commentators and think tanks make sweeping statements about the causes of crime and policies to tackle it. The best available evidence says they're wrong, so instead of being misled or having wool pulled over our eyes, it's time for people to ask for evidence behind crime policy and demand that public figures take account of reliable evidence.'



At the beginning of Mental Health Awareness Week 2015 (11–17 May) the Society's presidential team called on the government to recognise the impact of war, poverty, social divisions, inequity and the abuse of fundamental human rights on psychological health, and to do all that it can to combat these evils. The team is made up of Society President Professor Jamie Hacker Hughes, President Elect Professor Peter Kinderman and Professor Dorothy Miell, Vice President. Their statement read:

Too many people, especially women and children, are traumatised by war and armed conflict. We must work actively for peace, and we must extend both humanitarian care and the hand of friendship to people escaping from conflict zones.

We know that psychological health and wellbeing are largely dependent on our social circumstances. Especially in this period of economic austerity, we must work collectively to create a more humane society: to reduce or eliminate poverty, especially childhood poverty, and to reduce financial and social inequality. We need to work harder to promote peace, social justice and equity, and ensure that citizens are properly fed, housed, and educated, and living in a sustainable natural ecosystem.



Equally, we must protect both adults and children from bullying and discrimination: whether that is racism, homophobia, or discrimination based on sexuality, gender, disability, 'mental health' or any other characteristic. We can all do more to combat discrimination and promote a more tolerant and accepting society.

Keynotes: Martin Bohus & Perry Hoffman

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Annual Conference 2016, Nottingham See p.i
Division of Educational and Child Psychology Annual Conference and TEP Day See p.479
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Psychology in the Pub See p.489
Developmental and Social Psychology Sections Joint Annual Conference See p.489
Division of Clinical Psychology Faculty for Sexual Health and HIV day conference on FGM See p.490
Division of Clinical Psychology Faculty of Eating Disorders anorexia masterclass See p.491

See adverts p.490 Closing date 17 July 2015



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2015

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|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Psychology of Women Section | 8-10 July | Cumberland Lodge, Windsor | www.bps.org.uk/pows2015 |
| Division of Counselling Psychology | 10-11 July | Majestic Hotel, Harrogate | www.bps.org.uk/dcop2015 |
| Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section | 2-4 September | Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge | www.bps.org.uk/qmip2015 |
| Developmental Section & Social Section | 9-11 September | The Palace Hotel, Manchester | www.bps.org.uk/devsoc2015 |
| Division of Health Psychology | 16-18 September | Radisson Blu Portman, London | www.bps.org.uk/dhp2015 |
| Children and Young People | 6-7 October | Crowne Plaza Birmingham NEC | www.bps.org.uk/cyp2015 |
| Psychology4Students | 19 November | Mercure, Sheffield | www.bps.org.uk/p4s2015 |
| Psychology4Students | 1 December | Friends Meeting House, Euston, London | www.bps.org.uk/p4s2015 |
| Psychology4Graduates | 2 December | Friends Meeting House, Euston, London | www.bps.org.uk/p4g2015 |
| Division of Clinical Psychology | 2-4 December | Radisson Blu Portman, London | www.bps.org.uk/dcp2015 |
| Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology | 14-15 December | The Queens Hotel, Leeds | www.bps.org.uk/dsep2015 |

2016

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Division of Occupational Psychology | 6-8 January | East Midlands Conference Centre, Notts | www.bps.org.uk/dop2016 |
| Annual Conference | 26-28 April | East Midlands Conference Centre, Notts | www.bps.org.uk/ac2016 |

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| Cognitive assessment of children and young people (Day 2) (Cross network) Leeds | 1 July |
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| Expert witness: Responsibilities and business (Workshop 1) | 3 September |
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| Overcoming resistance to change using process consultation (Cross network) | 8 September |
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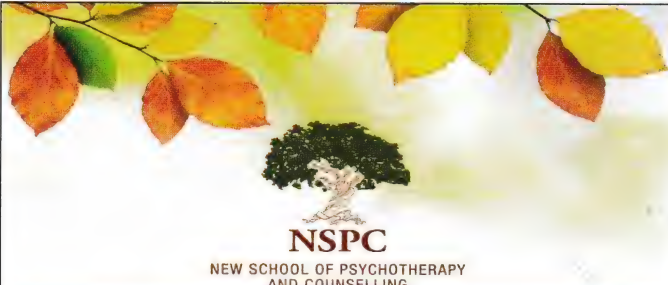
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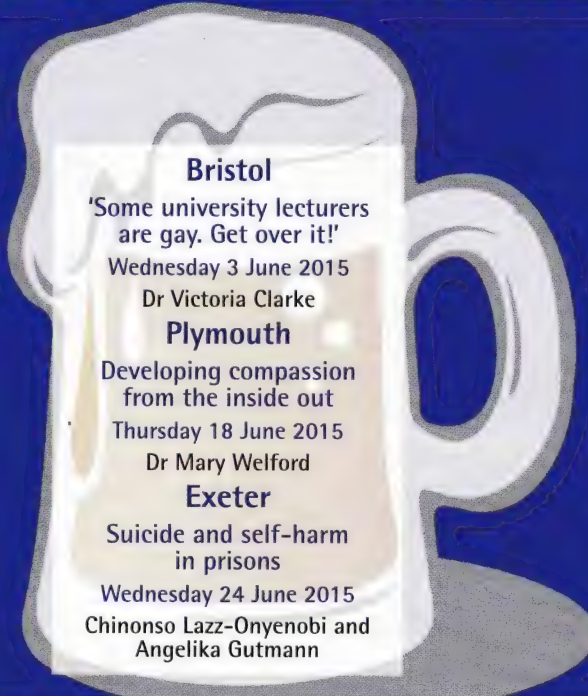




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Clinical Neuropsychology Qualifications Board Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology

Chair

The Board is seeking to appoint a Chartered Member of the Society who is a Clinical Neuropsychologist to take on the role of Chair from 1 November 2015. The Clinical Neuropsychology Qualifications Board is concerned with the assessment of the Society's Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology (QICN), which confers eligibility to be entered onto the Society's Specialist Register of Clinical Neuropsychologists. The Board's work is overseen by the Society's Qualifications Standards Committee (QSC), which consists of the Chairs of all Society Qualifications Board, which in turn is answerable to the Membership Standards Board (MSB).

For further information and a Statement of Interest form, please contact Sarah Day, Qualifications Officer, at sarah.day@bps.org.uk or on 0116 252 9518 between 2pm and 4.30pm.

Completed forms and documentation should be received by **Friday 17 July 2015**.

Interested parties are welcome to contact the current Chair, Dr. Ingram Wright, via Sarah Day for an informal discussion before they put forward their statement of interest.

Clinical Neuropsychology Qualifications Board Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology

Chief Assessor Elect

The Board is seeking to appoint a Chartered Member of the Society who is a Clinical Neuropsychologist to take on the role of Chief Assessor Elect from 1 September 2015. The Clinical Neuropsychology Qualifications Board is concerned with the assessment of the Society's Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology (QICN), which confers eligibility to be entered onto the Society's Specialist Register of Clinical Neuropsychologists. The role of Chief Assessor Elect involves shadowing the Chief Assessor on a range of matters before fully taking over as Chief Assessor. The role of Chief Assessor is to manage the assessment of all candidates undertaking this qualification. The role will start on 1 September 2015 with a shadowing period, before fully taking over the role on 1 November 2015.

For further information and a Statement of Interest form, please contact Sarah Day, Qualifications Officer, at sarah.day@bps.org.uk or on 0116 252 9518 between 2pm and 4.30pm.

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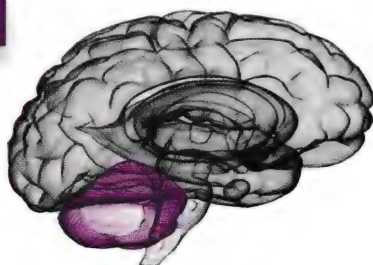
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Kelly Vitousek - Working With Anorexia Clinical Masterclass

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This event is organised by
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For further information, please visit the website:
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'The scientist/practitioner divide is nonsense'

Ian Florance meets occupational psychologist **Almuth McDowall**

I caught up with Almuth McDowall at the 2015 Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP) conference in Glasgow. Among a number of appearances in the programme she reported on progress in revising the Stage 2 qualification process for the training and accreditation of occupational psychologists. It seemed a good time to pick her brains on occupational psychology as a career.

'I'm now full-time at Birkbeck

University of London, having previously worked at City University and Surrey University, based in the Department of Organisational Psychology, which was the first of its kind in the UK! I am Course Director of the CIPD accredited MSc programme in HR development and consultancy, I lead specialised modules, supervise postgraduate work, do funded research – it's a full-time academic role. Birkbeck is an interesting place: originally set up as college for the "working men of

London" it was also one of the first colleges to admit women as students; curious to think that this shocked the nation at the time. Over the years, it's been a stronghold of adult and further education. That's why a lot of teaching is done at weekends and in evening sessions. Sometimes this is challenge for my own work-life balance, not least as I am juggling a large research project which has to remain secret for the moment. But I've come to relish the full-day workshops.'

Almuth has been involved in the Society for some time – she was formerly chair of the DOP. I asked her how she'd started contributing to its work.

'One of my many PhD supervisors suggested I give time to the BPS. I started working in the DOP and grew interested in continuing professional development. Being honest, I got a bit fed up with how long it took to get things done. The membership networks continue to be run by volunteers, and we simply didn't have the resources to drive things through, and, in any case, in a members' organisation there are set steps you have to go through to action any initiative. So I took a back seat for a while until the need for urgent action dawned on me when I became an MSc course director.

'I realised that clients and potential customers don't understand what we still refer to as "Chartership" (AKA a Stage 2 society-led qualification, which people undertake once they have completed their MSc): we need to shout the benefits of working with a regulated profession from the rooftops. It also became increasingly clear that the master's curriculum did not fit the reality of occupational psychology work. The world of our work has changed – examples include the growth in coaching, more emphasis on wellbeing and the decline of ergonomics as a specialism. It was also clear that we were not working enough in organisational development and change, leaving this practice area to other professions.'

Almuth is clear that psychologists have so much to give: '...specialist



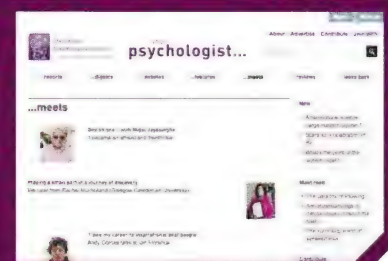
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For other Society careers resources, see www.bps.org.uk/careers.

For the latest jobs, visit www.psychapp.co.uk. Society members can sign up for suitable e-mail and RSS alerts. Recruiters can post online from just £750, and at no extra cost when placing an ad in print. For more information, see p.496.



knowledge and technical expertise, as well as our ethical stance, an appreciation of the limits to our competence, and drawing from evidence-based practice. Still, at an organisational level you also need the guts to be potentially controversial by suggesting something different, to be courageous and self-confident enough to work with senior teams. Psychologists often lack conviction, and there's a real tension between what we know and how we package ourselves. In Europe, even MSc training involves more work experience, as students undertake two-year programmes, and I feel that it is vital to integrate such practical components into our UK-based training.'

I felt it was the last-chance saloon for our profession

'Anyway, I re-involved myself in the DOP. Central to my work is a strong belief that the scientist/practitioner divide is a load of nonsense. Applied psychologists are about evidence-based practice. Simple.'

Hazel Stevenson, then DOP chair, suggested that Almuth step forward as the next chair. 'I felt it was the last-chance saloon for our training path and therefore the future of our profession. We'd had done a major review of what we do and how we are perceived – *OP First*, the report published in 2006 – out of which had come the clear recommendation that action was needed, but it hadn't had any great effect. Then Hazel came along and persuaded some of the best minds in our Division to undertake a review of training and development, which reiterated that not doing anything was far more risky than trying to initiate change. I'm pretty stubborn and thought "I can get things done". You have to be realistic as a Division chair though and only take on what you can deliver. But the revision of Stage 1 – the MSc curriculum – is now done and dusted, being adopted and getting good feedback. I knew from the start that work on Stage 2 would be more difficult, and as you saw at the conference session there are widely differing ideas about what qualifying training should cover, how long it should take, what stages there would be. The issue of understanding post-MSc qualification routes remains key and we have to promote the value of being registered.'

What does the future of occupational psychology look like? 'We need something dramatic to trigger change and a process of self-organisation. If that doesn't happen I suspect that occupational psychology will not exist as a major identifiable profession in 10

years' time. But this is not just an issue for the Division. Psychology has huge opportunities given the thirst for psychological knowledge, particularly in the media. A question I often hear is "What is behavioural science?" Shouldn't we as psychologists be in the forefront of that debate? Increased public promotion of psychology is written into the Society's strategic plan but we need concrete and tangible action.'

I grew up surrounded by British squaddies

Where does this huge commitment to her profession as well as her strong views on the future of psychology come from? Almuth described her route into psychology, and I suspect it explains, in part at least, her unique perspective.

'I grew up in Westphalia which is a lovely but also very boring part of Germany! My home town housed the now last remaining British army base in Germany, so I grew up surrounded by British squaddies. I originally came to England to complete my classical dance training but fell out of love with dance here. In the UK you repeat endless drills. The Russian school, which I'd grown up with, stressed a more mentally challenging and creative approach. I suppose that's where I learnt internal discipline, but also to put on a show, even when you don't feel like it. These are core skills which have stood me in good stead, as working with clients, but also working in education, is often about performance. Our clients and our students deserve to get the best, and it's not only what you know but also how you deliver this that makes the difference. I also discovered that I was less interested in teaching children, but I loved teaching dance to adults as I could be as creative as I wanted, rather than stick to set instructions. So I trained as a fitness instructor and really enjoyed being a personal trainer to some high-profile people. But I began to realise that some were becoming over-dependent on me and expecting to be sure of the results of fitness training. And, of course, you can't change physically unless you change mentally. As my workload had been growing but I was also having thought about how best to look into the future, I had two choices – start up a company to service my growing client base or retrain. I did the latter.'

It's interesting that, in interviewing practitioners for *The Psychologist*, training in dance has cropped up more than you would expect. Almuth suggests the link between mind and body (which is central,

particularly to classical dance) and the need for (staggering amounts of) discipline feeds into success as a psychologist

Did psychology surprise you? 'I'd been warned about the statistics and "science bit", so no. I'd already done a course in systemic therapy at Birkbeck and was initially interested in counselling psychology, but psychologists have an absolute responsibility to call a spade a spade and be honest about what we are good at. I was not suited to working with individuals day in day out. But I've kept up my interest in the area and am a very active member of the Special Group in Coaching Psychology. I did my own MSc at Goldsmiths where there was a wonderful faculty that inspired me. Clive Fletcher convinced me to do a PhD and I stayed at Goldsmiths for a few years. My supervisors changed a lot and I ended up finishing my PhD at City University where John Rust's Psychometrics Centre was at the time. Then I moved to Surrey.'

Work as we know it is changing as we speak

You've mentioned some internal issues for occupational psychology as a profession. Given your experiences, what are the key issues for it as a practice? 'Change and complexity. If you want to make a difference in any organisation, you have to address these. Slowly but surely organisations are beginning to take the diversity agenda on board, and this has positive implications for the work-life balance issue, which is very dear to my heart. But there's lots to do. Work as we know it is changing as we speak, as we work more connected, more virtual, and often also with more ambiguity. Plus, we seem to lose sight of the necessity of switching off – young peoples' work penetrates every aspect of their life, as they are often connected 24/7.'

Almuth practises what she preaches ensuring she balances her work with a wide range of external interests. But she is passionate, though clear-sighted, about occupational psychology, drawing on her work experience, her training and the views developed through her roles in the Society. 'I'd encourage anyone to go in for it, even though I've suggested the future is uncertain. Most practitioners I know do what they do because they see it as a way to make a genuine difference to people's lives. Work is so important to our life satisfaction, to our happiness, to our mental health and wellbeing. We have an important and satisfying role; the beauty about occupational psychology is that you can apply it anytime and anywhere.'

People first, science second

Ann Wood explores the personal and professional issues encountered when addressing the spiritual lives of service users in mental health settings

It has been suggested that religion and spirituality is psychiatry's 'last taboo', and that the spiritual beliefs of service users are frequently 'pathologised' by mental health practitioners (see the Mental Health Foundation report from 2007, *Keeping the Faith*, tinyurl.com/l7qxbz). Isabel Clarke, a clinical psychologist with a special interest in spirituality, recalls (tinyurl.com/nfe6znb) offering spirituality awareness training for staff and how it was an extremely difficult subject for some to discuss, as difficult as issues of sex and sexuality once was: '...staff were frequently at a loss when faced with the religious and spiritual preoccupations of the people they were working with.'

Whilst this could be considered an extreme response and aversion to spirituality, the sentiments shared resonate quite strongly with me. Whilst working as an assistant psychologist on an inpatient ward, I was asked to facilitate a spirituality group and was astonished by the number of professional and personal issues it raised. I will briefly explore this issue and how the experience of facilitating the group led to fundamental changes in how I work and interact with service users.

My experience and ambivalence about the group

The spirituality group, 'My Journey', was offered at Phoenix Ward, a rehabilitation unit for 18 individuals at Springfield University Hospital, London. The ward specialises in offering care and treatment to individuals who have significant mental health difficulties and have found it difficult to live independently or in less supported accommodation. In recent years a spirituality group has been offered on the ward many times, and along with the chaplain I became a group facilitator in 2010.

I was very ambivalent about becoming involved in the group as I was more familiar with offering sessions that were highly structured, psycho-educational in nature and with a 'proven' evidence base, such as cognitive behaviour therapy. At the outset I was particularly concerned about the value of this intervention and in particular whether it was endorsed by research evidence.

I was also concerned about some of the very difficult, personal and spiritual topics that we would talk about in group. I felt unable to prepare myself adequately to respond and support group members, especially when discussing such a diverse, 'unscientific' topic in a 'manual-free'



environment. I lacked confidence in my own clinical skills and was perhaps drawn to offering structured sessions that provided me with a sense of order and confidence in the material discussed; a sense of legitimacy and authorisation for the interventions.

I also considered whether discussing spirituality might be difficult or unhelpful for some service users. Harold Koenig has found (tinyurl.com/6wbm6du) that approximately one third of people who are experiencing psychosis either describe or are pre-occupied with 'religious delusions'. Others have found that people with schizophrenia who were engaging in very excessive religious practice, such as spiritual healing, were more likely to experience further episodes of psychosis (see tinyurl.com/krk4xv8). Therefore, it is perhaps understandable that many practitioners, including myself, are hesitant about discussing spirituality.

I was also very aware that, despite having worked in mental health services for over 10 years I had not been involved with or even aware of spirituality groups being offered on inpatient units. I carried out a literature review of the topic and struggled to find many research articles. I had also hoped to uncover a 'manualised' approach that I could confidently use as a guide. Whilst this was all quite

disappointing, my reading nonetheless proved extremely useful in other ways because a theme that I repeatedly encountered in my reading was that spirituality is an area that is 'religiously' overlooked by services.

I was also pleased to discover that some authors had indeed reviewed spirituality groups offered on mental health units. For example, Russell Phillips from Bowling Green State University facilitated a semi-structured group, and each week they proposed a specific topic (e.g. forgiveness, hope) (see tinyurl.com/myunhww). They asked group members for informal feedback and found that the group was highly valued and that participants wanted it continue. And Nancy Kehoe, a psychologist who has 30 years' experience of running spirituality groups, says that such a group 'provides valuable therapeutic experiences in tolerance, acceptance of other's views, and thoughtful examination of belief systems, as well as opportunities to apply spirituality and values to life questions' (see tinyurl.com/oz3gwju).

The descriptions of these two groups gave me the final push I needed, despite my reservations, to commit to running the group spirituality group at Phoenix.

My journey

My initial ambivalence about facilitating the group melted away very quickly when we got started. I soon found being involved with the group extremely rewarding. The whole atmosphere in the group was completely different to any other group that I had experienced. From the moment we invited people to attend the group it felt different. Each week everyone was warmly invited to attend the group, as you might invite someone to attend a social event. It was a personal and genuine invitation for people to spend time together. In practice, whilst the facilitators always had some ideas and topics in mind, the group was largely directed by group members and the topics which they wanted to bring. However, if topics or items were introduced by the facilitators, the emphasis remained on the

personal interpretation and meaning for group members. We encouraged an environment where people could share honest and critical opinions.

Over the course of two years we discussed many different topics, such as religious festivals, religious texts and stories, spiritual journeys and suffering – no two sessions were ever alike. This was a group about acceptance, people being themselves and being present with one another. The chaplain was particularly good at encouraging group members to share their own beliefs, and I could see that his curiosity and genuine interest meant a great deal to service users. To emphasise the importance of each contribution we started the 'Phoenix Book of Wisdom'; a book where participants could share and record their own ideas.

The atmosphere within the spirituality group might be described as 'non-directive', an approach that has infused many psychological theories, such as recovery approaches and person-centred therapy. I was already familiar with the work of the American counselling psychologist Carl Rogers from the 1940s, and I feel that the atmosphere within our group promoted the three 'core conditions' of this approach – unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. I also found that I was continually drawing on different psychological theories and therapeutic approaches, such as motivational interviewing, psychodynamic theories, mindfulness and guided discovery. Whilst in the past I would have used theory in a more mechanical and rigid manner, in this group I was still drawing on my knowledge and skills but was doing so in a more sympathetic, responsive and creative manner. I have since learned that this approach also has a name: an 'integrative' approach.

However, I am still left wondering whether a tension remains within me about how to work with people: the one side drawn to offering pure, therapy from one theoretical viewpoint and the other feeling more confident about responding more creatively using an integrative approach. Whilst reflecting on this I found it useful to consider the comments of Isabel Clarke in her book *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God*, as she recommends that there are two ways of thinking about the self: the 'functional office represents the rational, either-or logic, way of knowing. The mysterious room with no clear limits corresponds to the relational and emotional, way of knowing that is based on experience.' I suspect that when I became involved with the spirituality group I worked

solely within the 'functional office'. The group encouraged me to consider the 'mysterious room' and to experience for myself this way of being with people.

The experience has also led to me reflecting on the mindful atmosphere within the group. Mindfulness practitioners often refer to the two modes of 'being' and 'doing'. Often we are in the 'doing' mode and lose contact with the here and now or the 'being' mode. I feel that the very directive work which had been my preferred approach was akin to the 'doing' mode whilst the group made room for 'being' with service users.

Evaluation

It was rewarding to see people 'come alive' when they were in the group, the pride reflected in their faces when they themselves and their views were warmly accepted. When we asked people what the group meant to them, they tended to say it offered a sense community, that their contribution was respected, and that we were not trying to change them. They were thankful for the compassion and interesting discussions. Of course, this was an optional group, and we therefore only met with people who had a genuine wish to engage with us. And we could not demonstrate that this group made a difference for service users in terms of their symptoms, prognosis and length of stay in hospital. But we nevertheless felt that it had made a difference in terms of how people felt about themselves and that it had strengthened our therapeutic relationship with many service users.

Despite the apparent success of this group and the format used, it is also important to recognise that it was offered in a context where service users were offered many different interventions. Our group was facilitated alongside more directive interventions, assisting individuals to alleviate symptoms of their mental health problems and work towards their goals. However, this group seemed to offer a therapeutic counterbalance to interventions that place more emphasis on the need for change.

I look back at my experience in this group with great affection. I was inspired by many aspects of the experience; but mainly, the sensitivity of the chaplain, group members' enthusiasm and the respectful and welcoming atmosphere fostered. I am also more inclined towards being in the moment, present and mindful with service users. Whilst I will continue delivering more 'recognised' and evidence-based treatments, I feel nonetheless that my experience of this group has made me a better practitioner.



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Mass psychogenic illness, or more spooky?

The Falling, directed by Carol Morley, is centred on an epidemic of fainting at an English girls' school in the 1960s. Two teenage girls – Lydia and Abbie – are best buddies, but then Abbie loses her virginity to a boy, leaving Lydia feeling abandoned and jealous. Abbie tries to explain what sex is like – 'it's a little death... it takes you to another place' ... Lydia is desperate to escape into that other place. All is not right in her world – her dad ran off, her horny brother is into the occult, and her emotionally distant mother is agoraphobic.



The Falling
Carol Morley
(Director)

Lydia then faints in a class, in a rather dramatic fashion, and soon other girls are following suit. Even a young art teacher succumbs to the spell. Are the girls faking it to get attention? Is it mass hysteria? An outbreak of the libido from the unconscious? Or has the charismatic Lydia become some sort of portal or channel for occult energy from the environment?

Morley has previously explored 'mass psychogenic illness' ('psychogenic' means illnesses where there's a mental cause for physical symptoms) in a short film called *The Madness of the Dance*, in which a professor of medical humanities takes us on a tour of the condition: the dancing manias of the Middle Ages [Editor's note: see also the July 2009

'Looking back' piece by John Waller, tinyurl.com/ke6xvu9], outbreaks of biting and mewing like cats among young nuns, epidemics of laughing among Tanzanian factory workers, and so on.

What's going on in such cases? They seem to involve what psychologists call the placebo or nocebo effect – our bodies and immune systems are highly connected to our emotions and imaginations, and physical symptoms like nervous tics or compulsive laughter can spread between people through a sort of sympathy and suggestibility.

The preacher Jonathan Edwards observed this phenomenon in the mass ecstasy of the First Great Awakening in 18th-century America, during which congregations fainted, screamed, sobbed, laughed and danced wildly. In his masterpiece *Religious Affections*, Edwards tried to discern what was genuinely spiritual in these mass ecstatic outbursts, and what was psychological or pathological. He suggested that sometimes it is more the influence of custom or imitation than a genuine visitation of the Spirit. I've been in the middle of highly charismatic services in Wales, with people fainting and rolling on the floor, and had some experiences like that myself. Definitely, people are following a script, and the physical symptoms are triggered by their expectations (they came to get down, as it were). But there may be something more at work, too...

Such outbreaks of ecstasy can also occur outside the church, for example in raves. In the 1990s, at the same time as the Toronto Blessing, acid house and trance music spread across the UK, including to the Hacienda, where Carol Morley regularly went. I wonder if her interest in this area partly stems from that experience of 'the madness of the dance' – it's certainly what got me interested in this area. Think of, say, Beatlemania, or the Jitter-Bug, or girls screaming as Elvis twitches and sings 'well bless my soul, what's wrong with me, I'm itching like a man in a fuzzy tree...'

Such outbreaks clearly have social determinants: they can be

a reaction to overly rigid, hierarchical or depressing social conditions, a reaction to the discontents of civilisation, to the role you are expected to play – this was ably explored by Erika Bourignon in her 1973 book *Religion, Altered States of Experience and Social Change*. Humans need ways to lose themselves, to go beyond the ego and go to 'another place', and if their culture doesn't give them that, nature will find a way.

Is there anything spiritual in such occurrences, or are they just regressions to primitive or infantile stages of development, as Freud would suggest? Morley tries to keep the question open and ambiguous in her film, to balance medical explanations with more spiritual explanations – that the outbreak is somehow connected with the occult, with ley-lines, with a numinous energy in nature. But it was interesting, in an audience Q&A for the film which I attended at the London Film Festival last year, how the possibility that this is also a film 'about' spiritual energy was completely ignored. There's a common idea in every culture (except the modern secular West) that nature is infused with spiritual energy, and we can tap into it and access its power, either consciously – through worship or meditation or drugs or sex or magic – or unconsciously and accidentally, through spiritual experiences, near-death trauma, or sudden epidemics like dancing manias.

We seem to access this energy via altered states of consciousness, and it also sometimes involves certain places – pilgrimage sites, particular mountains or fields. The modern, secular, mechanistic culture of the West defined itself against this idea, and debunked successive traces of it – whether that be Descartes' 'animal spirits', *élan vital* of Vitalism, Mesmer's 'vital fluid', or the entire 'spiritual energy' industry of the New Age. That 'exorcism of spirits' from secular culture was not altogether a bad thing, because the concept was often used as a means to exploit or control the gullible. And yet we're still haunted by the ancient idea of spiritual energy – Freud called it the libido, Max Weber called it charisma, William James spoke of 'energy' that can be accessed through spiritual experiences or the 'subliminal self', while today's more cautious psychologists still reach for terms like 'mental capital', 'pool of attentional resources' or 'psychic energy'.

No one has ever found this energy or empirically measured it, so it's easy to dismiss it as woo-woo, a vestige of the animist past we have thankfully left behind. Personally, I am inclined to believe this energy exists in nature and is connected to our consciousness, and that we can align ourselves with it through spiritual practice. But I may very well be wrong. We should simply admit that we don't yet know – as the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi recently noted, psychology doesn't even have a working understanding of ordinary consciousness yet, let alone altered states of consciousness.

What is certainly the case is that some film-makers are exploring this shadowy area in interesting films – I have written a piece about 'the art of trance' in the films of David Lynch, Fellini, Kubrick and others. Peter Weir explores it beautifully in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, which is all about the dark numinous power of nature. In recent British cinema, films by Ben Oakley and Pawel Pawlikowski explore this dreamy terrain.

Morley's film explores this zone too. It's not just about mass psychogenic illness... it's possibly bit more spooky than that.

Reviewed by Jules Evans who is Policy Director, Centre for the History of the Emotions at Queen Mary, University of London. He co-edits the History of Emotions Blog (<https://emotionsblog.history.qmul.ac.uk>). An extended version of this review was originally published there, and reproduced on our own website.



A compelling view of what makes us violent

Virtuous Violence: Hurting and Killing to Create, Sustain, End, and Honor Social Relationships
Alan Page Fiske & Tage Shakti Rai (Foreword by Steven Pinker)

One of the most frequently asked questions in psychology is 'What motivates humans to commit violence against each other?'. Fiske and Rai's virtuous violence theory (VVT) is an intriguing and compelling take on answering this question. Their hypothesis is '...most violence is morally motivated. Morality is about regulating social relationships and violence is one way to regulate relationships.' Initially it would appear difficult to understand how violence could be seen as moral. When considered in the light of a relational models framework, supported by a wealth of ethnographic cases, historical examples and classical literature, the argument is both powerful and persuasive.

By their nature the examples and discussions of violence are quite graphic, covering some difficult areas (rape, torture and initiation rites, including FGM). However, the fact that the authors do not avoid these

areas and can demonstrate the applicability of VVT to make sense of the motivations behind these actions shows the utility of their hypothesis.

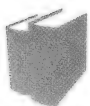
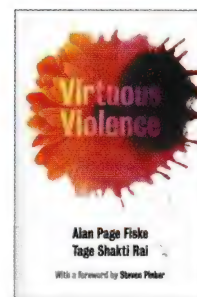
The first few chapters outlining the theory's applicability raised some questions. There is a short dividing piece at this point where authors delineate the first half of the book as considering the easy questions, where motivation for violence and understanding how VVT applies is fairly black and white. The second half is then introduced as intending to both answer some of the questions raised and focus on the harder questions, where in the abstract VVT makes sense, but the cases can be harder to view objectively.

The authors state upfront that they do not condone violence; they are keen to clarify that the discussions and examples included are for illustrative purposes and that they feel all violence to be immoral. The

later chapters of the book reinforce this, demonstrating how VVT can be applied in the real world not only to understand violence but how its incidence can be reduced, using examples from American gang culture. The last chapter progresses further, suggesting a number of questions for future researchers in this area, including expanding on the theory itself, and providing some intriguing food for thought. While one book can't expect to fully answer such a broad question as 'What motivates humans to commit violence?', this one certainly provides a large piece of the puzzle.

Cambridge University Press; 2014; Pb £16.99

Reviewed by Louise Beaton who is an Open University psychology graduate



Who guards the guardians?

The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership
Dennis Tourish

Within the book's 11 chapters, Tourish collates research on transformational leadership providing a wealth of information that progresses into suggestions for new ways of thinking about leadership. There are three sections: the first looks at the theoretical aspect of transformational leadership, the second provides case studies of the effects of unmonitored leaders whose decisions have not been questioned by others, and the third section looks at other ways of perceiving leadership.

Extending upon previous articles he has written, Tourish writes in a style that invokes interest and a desire to know more. He clearly has a depth of knowledge and has undertaken qualitative analysis of interview scripts examining the spoken themes of some of the bankers involved in the banking crisis. It is extremely readable and creates a spotlight upon the dangers of having unregulated power and the negative impact this has on employees, organisations and society.

At the end of each chapter there are discussion points that are suitable for lecturers to use with their students, making it an ideal educational book, but they are also helpful as general thinking points for any reader. It is typically an occupational psychology subject but it is highly relevant to all interested in the impact of leadership on organisations.

The final chapter proposes alternative ways of thinking about leadership, looking at the social systems in which leaders reside. Successful organisations are not just the result of one person and require collaboration rather than control. Tourish's thinking seems to be synonymous with that of Abraham Lincoln, who wanted people around him with opposing views, who were not afraid to speak their minds to formulate stronger decisions.

Routledge; 2014; Pb £24.99

Reviewed by Elizabeth Carter who is a Chartered Psychologist currently working at the University of South Wales



Voting behaviour

Human Zoo Election Special
Radio 4

This is an extended special edition on the election from the *Human Zoo*, the Radio 4 programme that looks at psychology through an experimental lens. Various experiments were discussed that, it was argued, demonstrated irrational behaviour, and unconscious influences on voting intentions. For example, given clear evidence that crime has reduced did not convince any participants to change their mind that crime levels are rising; but participants asked about climate change in an overheated room were more convinced that climate change is a problem. However, the programme did not address whether any of these effects could be considered lasting or robust, or how they might related to specific voting patterns. In real life, voting behaviour may be too complicated a concept to be captured in a laboratory.

Available on demand at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b036tbtly

Reviewed by Kate Johnstone who is a postgraduate student at UCL and Associate Editor (Reviews)



In the May issue 'Reviews' section, Professor Rory O'Connor gave a moving and personal account of his involvement with the BBC programme *Life After Suicide*. Unfortunately, we illustrated it with a photo of his identical twin, Professor Daryl O'Connor. This was a particularly unforgivable slip by our editor, given that he's been telling people recently that it is lazy to say they can't tell the O'Connor twins apart, because they're really not that similar. He would like to apologise profusely to both O'Connors, and point you to a handy primer on the difference between the two: tinyurl.com/thatisrory and tinyurl.com/thatisdaryl.



Depth, strength and potential

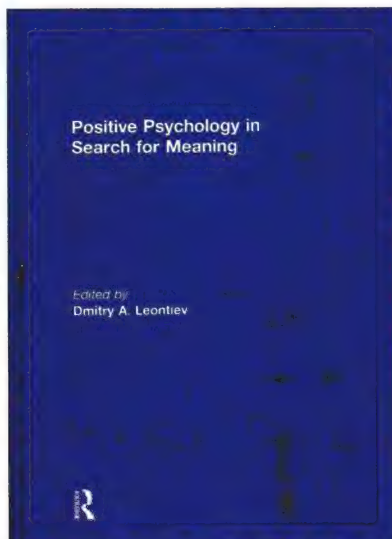
Positive Psychology in Search for Meaning
Dmitry A. Leontiev (Ed.)

Positive Psychology in Search for Meaning, edited by Dmitry A. Leontiev, is a collection of academic works collated to explore the concept of meaning within the larger field of positive psychology. These papers were originally published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology*, in November, 2013. Positive psychology and 'meaning' are introduced as two increasingly relevant concepts in modern psychological research. The central theme of meaning is outlined as a connector of disparate interpretations, being both rigorously academic and flexibly humanistic. Leontiev argues that the search for meaning within human experiences is an old one, and that the multitudes of traditional theories that spar with it (Freudian, post-Freudian, Vygotskian, post-Vygotskian) all obscure any clarity in definition for modern researchers. Collectively, the assembled works aim to build a modern concept of 'meaning' and integrate it within the current psychological lexicon.

This is achieved by first exploring the nature of personal meaning, and the importance of individual consideration and wider multifaceted characteristics of any interpretation of such. The title then leads the reader through the qualities of meaning within the human experience (including the role of intuition and motivation), draws a clear distinction between 'meaning' and 'happiness', before outlining measurement tools to aid future research. Overall, these

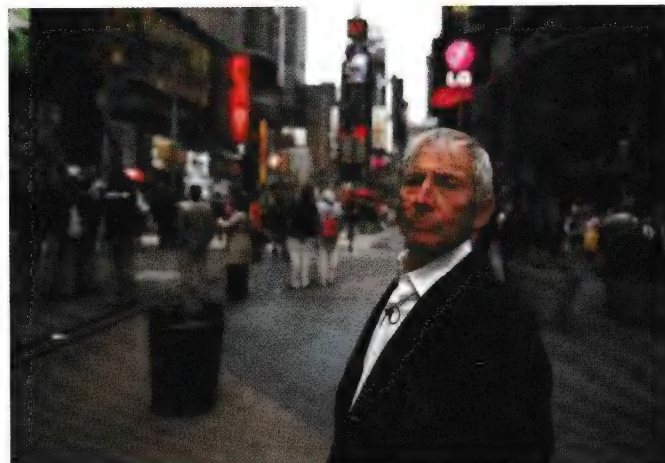
chapters lay a solid foundation that demonstrates the depth, strength and potential prevalent under this research topic.

Positive Psychology in Search for Meaning reads and flows well, harnessing a structure that compels further reading with an interlocking and complementary approach to chapter organisation. The title follows the convention of academic journal writing and is well supported by empirical



evidence, yet remains largely accessible, to the credit of the writers. The text is most suited for those with a background understanding of positive psychology and interest in wider philosophical questions of the human experience – but is equally accessible to curious newcomers to the field. An interesting interpretation of established and modern psychological principles.

I Routledge; 2015; Hb £90.00
Reviewed by Rory McDonald
who is a researcher and writer
at the University of Central
Lancashire



Stranger than fiction

The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst
Sky Atlantic

The 2010 film *All Good Things* (available on DVD) came and went without anyone much noticing. Despite the star power of Ryan Gosling and Kirsten Dunst, viewers did not engage with the fictionalised story of a multi-millionaire property investor's involvement in the disappearance of his wife, and murder of a neighbour. Now that film's director, Andrew Jarecki, has ditched the fiction and returned to the same subject in the six-part series *The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst* (Sky Atlantic). This time he has a winner on his hands.

It seems unlikely that the series would have been made if Durst hadn't put himself forward for interview. He tells Jarecki his lawyers have advised him against it. No wonder. Durst's life story is genuinely stranger than fiction. The series examines his life largely in chronological order, from childhood onwards. Jarecki gains interviews with most of the key players, with a few notable exceptions. The more we hear about Durst, and the more we see of him on camera, the stranger he seems. On occasions, he seems to find human interaction alien; at others, anything but. How far can his behaviour be accounted for by undoubtedly traumatic childhood events, and the freedoms available to those who have unlimited wealth? Is he all cold calculation, or is Durst a stranger even to himself?

At times, Jarecki can't resist making his points more forcefully than evidence will allow, and he dramatises certain key moments. Sometimes these are effective – in one scene we see Durst's wife Kathie board the Manhattan-bound train alone late at night (as Durst has maintained she did one night in January 1982). The next time we see this scene, no one gets on and the train doors whoosh shut with a brutal finality. Occasionally these dramatisations seem voyeuristic, and veer too close to entertainment for comfort. But we are gradually presented with an accumulation of evidence that seem to lead to only one conclusion.

The series has been compared to the podcast *Serial*, which followed a journalist's investigation of a murder and the possible unsafe conviction of Adnan Syed. But the similarity is only skin deep. *The Jinx* is on a whole different scale than the more homespun *Serial*, and needs to be: the lives of many people have been irrevocably changed by Robert Durst.

Spoiler alert: don't Google if you want maximum enjoyment. There are at least three genuine jaw-dropping moments, the final one of which was widely reported. The last scene leaves the viewer reeling. And it's a certainty that we will be seeing Durst on our screens again, one way or another.

I Reviewed by Kate Johnstone who is a postgraduate student at UCL
and Associate Editor (Reviews)

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Timely and welcome



Processing Inaccurate Information: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives from Cognitive Science and the Educational Sciences
David N. Rapp & Jason L.G. Braasch (Eds.)

This thoroughly informative book focuses on the topic of inaccurate information among the current state of research in the areas of language, memory and education. It strongly encourages the notion of interdisciplinary research, trying to bridge the gap between the cognitive and educational sciences in this field, and I believe it succeeds in doing so.

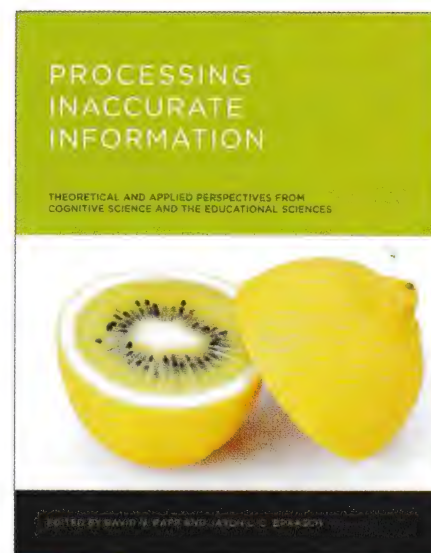
The 19 chapters in the book describe almost every conceivable angle on the topic, written by 40 contributors worldwide and not only covering the various theoretical perspectives, but also highlighting the diversified methodological approaches in a profound effort to bring together related research from different fields. By doing so, it provides a valuable and up-to-date resource for anyone working in the area of misinformation and knowledge acquisition.

Some chapters describe the behavioural consequences of relying on misinformation. A particularly good contribution was on correcting misinformation and the

challenges for education and cognitive science. This situated research on inaccurate information among contemporary debates such as the misinformed link between autism and the MMR vaccine, and its 'continued influence effect' on memory. There was also an excellent section on the variety of epistemological perspectives on misinformation.

What I found most informative about the book were the detailed frameworks of when and how inaccuracies would lead to difficulties in comprehension and, always in an effort to try and link the areas of cognitive and educational sciences, the possible routes of remediation and intervention.

I would say the main endeavour of this book is to highlight the importance of acknowledging the significance of misconceptions in learning and knowledge acquisition, which the editors argue many studies have tended to ignore. It offers both an informed take on the theoretical and



empirical perspectives, but also on the consequences of inaccuracies in information for knowledge acquisition. In this sense it is both timely and welcome.

MIT Press; 2014; Hb £34.95

Reviewed by Zayba Ghazali who is a PhD student at University College London

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Scandi blanche



Force Majeure
Ruben Östlund
(Director)

Force Majeure (on general release) finally arrives in UK cinemas via the Cannes Film Festival, where it won a prize in the 'Un Certain Regard' section, for original and different work. It is undoubtedly both.

We see the perfect family at the start of the perfect holiday. Handsome Swede Tomas (Johannes Bah Kuhnke) and his willowy wife Ebba (Lisa Loven Kongsli) ski the slopes of the French Alps with their beautiful pre-adolescent son and daughter. There's comfortable exhaustion from a hard day's skiing, and cute sulkiness from the boy. The only fly in the ointment is Tomas's attachment to his iPhone.

Clearly, 90 minutes of this unadulterated harmony would be excruciating for the poor viewer. Fortunately, director Ruben Östlund knows what he's about. A slightly unhinged arrangement of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* saws away beneath footage of the efforts the resort has to go to, to keep the slopes pristine. Then there's the ominous nightly boom of cannons, fired to create controlled avalanches. It's a metaphor that works on a number of levels: not just the gap between appearances and reality, but the tension between man and nature.

Eating lunch on an open-air veranda on their second day, the family are initially awed as what seems to be another controlled avalanche heads their way. This rapidly turns to terror as it picks up speed and size. The veil of civilisation is ripped away when we see the very different reactions of Tomas and Ebba to a life-threatening situation. The repercussions of this event accumulate with Tomas's steadfast refusal to admit what happened.

At the heart of the drama is a question about masculinity, and how it is defined in 21st century Western countries. Is Tomas less of a man because of how he acted, or because he won't admit his vulnerability? Is his true nature revealed by this event, or how he deals with it? Is Ebba a better person because her reaction was different, or because she's a woman? Be warned: if you watch this film with a member of the opposite sex, you're likely to have a big argument on the way home.



Visually, the film is a treat, not least because of Östlund's tendency to shoot wide, allowing the eye to roam wherever it will. It also gives the close-ups far greater impact when he does use them. And all of the performances are terrific, especially Kuhnke's. Östlund finds the perfect balance between the main characteristics associated with Scandinavian film-making: glacial coolness à la Bergman, and von Trier histrionics. A force to be reckoned with.

Force Majeure is on general release and available on demand at www.forcemajeurefilm.co.uk

Reviewed by Kate Johnstone who is a postgraduate student at UCL and Associate Editor (Reviews)

Highly recommended



Cognitive Therapy of Personality Disorders

Aaron T. Beck, Denise D. Davis & Arthur Freeman (Eds.)

This is the third edition of the widely used practitioner resource and builds well upon previous editions. It clearly describes common presentations and conceptualisations of 12 specific personality disorders, and provides detailed descriptions of clinical interventions, using case illustrations.

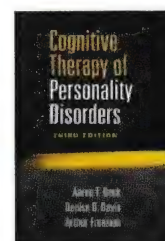
The authors extend the chapters on clinical interventions with comments on treatment goals, lifespan or developmental considerations, termination issues, common challenges in working with each disorder and tips for clinician self-care. Chapters on clinical interventions have been refreshed to integrate newer developments in the field of cognitive behavioural therapy that are relevant to personality disorders: motivational interviewing, mindfulness,

values clarification, schema role plays and other experiential exercises. Importantly, the authors add a chapter on clinical management, which acknowledges the challenges people with personality disorder commonly present to mental health teams and ways to address these. This adds a systemic perspective, crucial to the effectiveness of therapy.

Put together, these additions provide a comprehensive resource for both experienced and less experienced clinicians, and is highly recommended.

Guilford Press; 2014; Hb £36.99

Reviewed by Dr Nina Memarnia who is a clinical psychologist with Haringey East Community Support and Recovery Team



Sample titles just in:

The Forgiveness Project Marina Cantacuzino

Shrinks: The Untold Story of Psychiatry Jeffrey A. Lieberman with Ogi Ogas

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ETAWARD

Does psychology have a gender?

Alexandra Rutherford, Kelli Vaughn-Johnson and Elissa Rodkey

In 1967, a year before his death, American psychologist Edwin Boring published an account of The Experimentalists, the invitation-only psychology club that his mentor, British-born and Oxford-educated Edward Bradford Titchener, founded at Cornell University in 1904. Boring began attending meetings in 1911 while a graduate student with Titchener. He later wrote the following of his inaugural experience with the club: 'It was my first meeting, and the occasion when Dodge and Holt attacked Titchener on introspection. My wife-to-be and Mabel Goudge secreted themselves in a next room with the door just ajar to hear what unexpurgated male psychology was like' (Boring, 1967, p.322). Boring's wife-to-be was Lucy Day, herself a graduate student with Titchener. So why weren't she and fellow student Mabel Goudge in the club?

Not only were women banned from The Experimentalists until after Titchener's death, but the meetings themselves were designed to be distinctly masculine affairs. As historian Laurel Furumoto has documented, the practices, atmosphere, and even *kind* of psychology permitted for discussion was gendered (Furumoto, 1988). Titchener was a staunch advocate of psychology as an instrument-heavy, laboratory-based science. Although apparently he did not see this kind of psychology as gender-specific (he supervised many women and appears to have been quite proud of their accomplishments, despite not wanting

them in his gentleman's club!), Boring would later come to insist that women were, with only a few notable exceptions, unsuited for and uninterested in the laboratory. In his subsequent writings on scientific eminence, Boring portrayed science as a distinctly masculine enterprise for which women were temperamentally and intellectually unsuited (see Rutherford, in press).

Gender historian Judith Zinsser has recently commented that, 'Historians of every region of the world know that "learning" and the "learned" have not been fixed entities. All that has been fixed in the past is the sex and gender of those who defined the concept and enjoyed its prerogatives' (Zinsser, 2014, p.5). So we pose the questions, Does psychology have a gender? What would a history that approached psychology as itself gendered look like? Why would it matter?

Gendering psychology

Since the 1970s or so, historians and psychologists have developed a wonderfully rich literature on the history of women in psychology in many parts of the world (e.g. Gul et al., 2013; Gundlach et al., 2010; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987). This literature was and is a needed corrective to histories that had, until then, been written largely by and about men, treating male and masculine as unmarked universals. Elizabeth Valentine, for example, in previous issues of this publication, has offered tantalising

portraits of four women in early British experimental psychology: Beatrice Edgell, Victoria Hazlitt, May Smith and Nellie Carey (Valentine, 2008, 2010). While a graduate student at University College London, Carey won the prestigious Carpenter Medal, awarded only every three years for a doctoral dissertation of exceptional distinction in experimental psychology. Carey undertook carefully designed experimental work on sensation, perception and the structure of mental abilities. Edgell, Hazlitt and Smith too were all enthusiastically devoted to laboratory science, as were many of the early women in American psychology like Christine Ladd-Franklin and Margaret Floy Washburn.

As Valentine notes: 'In terms of experimental psychology specifically, it is noteworthy that women often undertook heroic experiments and pioneered new methods... There is no evidence for... separate spheres of operation for men and women, with women occupying



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“caring” practitioner roles, and men ‘understanding’ scientist roles, that became prevalent later in the century...’ (Valentine, 2010, p.974). Despite Boring’s exhortations, the laboratory was a comfortable place for women in the earliest days of academic psychology. So what happened? Furumoto has shown that it was not until after WWI that American women began to be explicitly funnelled into ‘lower status’ applied work, often with children (Furumoto, 1987), effectively setting up the separate spheres to which Valentine refers.

The patterns of women’s participation in our field provide a revealing window on the gendering of certain areas of psychology – the process whereby women’s ‘preferences’ and ‘predispositions’ come to appear as natural or essential rather than as a result of social processes in which power and authority have played decisive roles. Those in positions of power, as Zinsser reminds us, have had the ability to dictate the value and

meaning of others’ knowledge and their place in the ‘learned culture’.

Oral history is a powerful methodological tool for uncovering these social processes. In our *Psychology’s Feminist Voices* oral history and digital archive project (www.feministvoices.com), one can find multiple examples. For example, Canadian-born psychologist Lila Braine earned her doctoral degree in physiological psychology in 1951 with noted neuropsychologist Donald Hebb at McGill University in Montreal. Post-PhD she began working in the neuropsychology laboratory of Hans-Lukas Teuber at New York University. A full-time researcher, she decided she would like to get some teaching experience. Accordingly, she approached the head of the psychology department at New York’s City College and asked if she could teach physiological psychology. The department head said no, but he could offer her a course in developmental psychology. When she refused on the grounds that she was not a developmental psychologist and had never taken a course in the subject, he averred that it was okay, ‘you’ll learn, you’re a woman. Just keep a chapter ahead’ (Braine, 2009, p.13).

Braine did not accept his proposal to keep a chapter ahead, but decided that learning a bit about developmental psychology, especially the cognitive and perceptual development of children, might not be a bad idea. The next year she went back and taught developmental. When she began giving papers at conferences in developmental psychology, she found the gender dynamics much more congenial than those she had encountered in the virtually all-male world of physiological psychology. In developmental psychology she found ‘a lot of women, for one thing’. In contrasting this with the masculine domain of physiological, she remarked, ‘I...found it so much more hospitable.

There were people to talk to in a different way. I didn’t feel I had to be careful about what I said. I felt more welcomed. It was a gradual move... I’m not unhappy, but there really was a lot of sexism in my

move into developmental’ (Braine, 2009, p.13). Braine’s story highlights that her move – and perhaps those

of many other

women – into what has typically been regarded as a feminine area of psychology had little to do with her original interests and talents and much to do with the power and professional dynamics she encountered.

“gendered meanings infused every step of the design of the experiment”

Gendering genius

Although individual life narratives provide one window on the gendering of science, there are multiple ways that gendering works in and through psychology. Consider the work of psychologist Peter Hegarty. In his historical research, Hegarty has analysed the career of Lewis Terman to expose the knotty relationship between scientific theories of intelligence, and gender and sexuality (Hegarty, 2007). Specifically, Hegarty examines Terman’s research to show how it was designed to reinforce the logic that genius was gendered masculine, and heterosexual. In Terman’s *Genetic Studies of Genius* both boys and girls were given IQ tests and tests of masculinity/femininity. Overall, for both boys and girls, higher masculinity was associated with higher IQs. When effeminate boys did show high IQs, Terman attempted to downplay their potential for homosexuality to reinforce the notion that high IQ was also equated with heterosexuality. Thus, Terman enforced both the link between intelligence and masculinity and intelligence and heterosexuality – at least in men.

As an example of gender analysis, Hegarty’s work attends to the process through which genius became gendered in the empirical work of a male scientist, how gender ideologies, as well as ideologies about sexual orientation, course through science, and how the gendering of a neutral category – intelligence – served to enforce the power/authority of a particular group.

Gendering the laboratory

Deploying gender analysis in a different way, historian of psychology Ian



R. Nye (Eds.) *Masculinities in science*. Osiris, Volume 30.

Scarborough, E. & Furumoto, L. (1987). *Untold lives: The first generation of American women psychologists*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Shields, S.A. (2007). Passionate men, emotional women: Psychology constructs gender difference in the late 19th century. *History of Psychology*, 10, 92–110.

Smith, R. (2005). Does reflexivity separate

the human sciences from the natural sciences? *History of the Human Sciences*, 18, 1–25.

Valentine, E. (2008). The other woman. *The Psychologist*, 21(1), 86–87.

Valentine, E. (2010). Women in early 20th-century experimental psychology. *The Psychologist*, 23(12), 972–974.

Zinsser, J.P. (2014). Imagining patterns of learned culture: A cross-cultural view. *Gender & History*, 26, 5–22.

Nicholson has used the iconic Milgram shock-box experiments to show that laboratory practices themselves can reveal much about the gendered concerns of certain times and places (Nicholson, 2011). While typically presented as a product of post-Holocaust anxiety over the nature of evil, Nicholson proposes that there was another explicitly gendered concern that coursed through not just the external logic of the Milgram experiments but also the very performance of them. He argues that the obedience-to-authority experiments reflected deeply felt American Cold War anxieties over gender, science and the strength of masculine national character. He embeds the experiments in social and cultural concern over an enfeebled American masculinity, and shows how gendered meanings infused every step of the design of the experiment – from the manliness of the confederate who was cast as the experimenter, to the effeminacy of the beleaguered, submissive learner who was chosen to look the part of an ‘inferior male.’ The learner was effectively emasculated in front of the subjects as he was strapped to his chair and hooked up to the machine: ‘What was on display in this polished, gender-enhanced context was not simply “obedience” but masculinity itself’ (p.255).

Thus, as an example of gender analysis, Nicholson shows how the very performance of a psychological experiment becomes freighted with gendered meaning and reveals, not only timeless, universal laws about human nature – as the Milgram experiments were purported to do – but the psychology of a very particular cultural and political moment.

Gendering the history of psychology

There are many other individual studies that apply gender analysis to aspects of the history of psychology. For example, Jill Morawski has shown how early mental tests and personality measures were imbued with assumptions about normative masculinity and femininity, leading psychological researchers not only to reify these categories but to reinforce prescriptions about social order (Morawski, 1985). Stephanie Shields has analysed British and American

psychology’s late 19th-century representations of ideal emotionality in men and women. She has argued that gendered interpretations served to keep women tied to the domestic sphere and highlighted men’s suitability for public and political life, thus serving an important power function (Shields, 2007). Even psychologists’ assumptions about animal behaviour have been gendered, as Donna Haraway has shown in the case of the primatological research of Robert Yerkes (Haraway, 1990). Examples such as these convince us that attending systematically to the gendering of psychology would result in a very different view of the discipline’s history, if not the history of its subject matter, from what we have seen up to now. To write such a history is a daunting task. Why should we undertake it?

Gender analysis offers some particularly rich historiographic potential for psychology as a science that is not only gendered on multiple levels but also directly produces scientific knowledge

about gender itself. It is a powerful contributor to – as much as it draws upon – the ‘beliefs about gender’ that affect everyday experience and how we understand each other and ourselves. This deeply reflexive nature of psychology has been extensively discussed by historians (see Smith, 2005). Gender is one of the primary axes of self-understanding and social and political organisation – including that of science. Thus, examining how the gendering of psychology has influenced its knowledge-generation about gender can help us begin to disentangle the science/gender system in new ways. Finally, by bringing close historical scrutiny to the ways that gender ideologies run in and through psychology, we can start to destabilise – and perhaps even change – them today.

Alexandra Rutherford, Kelli Vaughn-Johnson and Elissa Rodkey are at York University, Toronto
alexr@yorku.ca

Psychology's Feminist Voices Women Past Feminist Presence About Us

Changing Face of Feminist Psychology WATCH THE VIDEO

We need to recognize that, yes, we're women together, but there are differences in our experiences based on how we are perceived.

Jean Lau Chin

Profound Shift

Psychology has undergone a profound shift over the last 50 years. In 1960, women received only a small minority of doctorates in the field. Today, in many parts of the world, women receive the majority. To understand this shift and the role women and feminists have played in it, we need to collect the first-hand accounts of feminist psychologists who were instrumental in bringing about these changes and those who continue to enrich psychology with feminism. We also need to be aware of our history. Who were the women who came before us? How did their work lay the foundation for feminist psychology? This site highlights important women in psychology's past and amplifies the diverse voices of contemporary feminist psychologists. We invite you to explore their stories.

Search for a Psychologist

Enter Keyword

Please Select Era

Go

Using life and career narratives to understand the ways that gendering affects all aspects of science – what Evelyn Fox-Keller calls the science/gender system – is one of the goals of the Psychology's Feminist Voices project, an oral history and digital archive initiative that we launched in 2010 to collect, preserve, and disseminate the narratives of self-identified feminist psychologists, and to highlight women who have made contributions to psychology since it was founded in the late 1800s. Profiles of Lucy May Day Boring, Beatrice Edgell, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Margaret

Floy Washburn, and over 120 other women in the history of psychology, can be accessed at the Women Past section of the site (www.feministvoices.com/past). Over 120 profiles of self-identified contemporary feminist psychologists, including Lila Braine, can be found in 'Feminist Presence' (www.feministvoices.com/presence). Full transcripts of the interviews we have conducted with these psychologists are also available to illuminate how feminism, gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation have influenced their lives and careers and ultimately psychology itself.

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... with Lydia M. Hopper

'I'm fascinated by animals'

One event that defined the course of your career

When I was around 10 years old, I visited the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Malaysia where I was fortunate to observe rehabilitant orphaned orangutans climbing through the trees and exploring the jungle. I had always been fascinated by animals, but seeing these methodical and thoughtful creatures piqued my interest in primates specifically. Therefore, whilst an undergraduate at Liverpool University, I sought opportunities to study the orangutans at Chester Zoo and that was the true beginning of my career studying primate (both human and nonhuman!) social cognition.

One inspiration

My parents. I hope they can, collectively, count as 'one'. Beyond instilling in me a love and respect for animals, they also taught me to question



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and challenge – perfect attributes for a scientist. Between them, they continually encourage me to pursue my interests and to find roles that I find satisfying and stimulating.

One proud moment

Most recently, being invited by the Gruter Institute for Law and Behavioral Research to provide a comparative perspective on the psychology of innovation, as part of a workshop held at the House of Lords.

One film

I adore the BBC's adaption of Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm* directed by John Schlesinger; it is an enduring pick-me-up for me. The cast is fantastic, a real who's who of British drama, and I especially enjoy the beautiful period 1920s costumes, which create the striking contrast between country and city life. It is especially lovely to watch now that I live in America as many of the scenes were filmed in East Sussex where I grew up, and so watching this film whisks me back to my familiar countryside of rolling hills and Sussex farmhouses.

One book

The Mentality of Apes by

Wolfgang Köhler. Although originally published in 1925, it is amazing to me how contemporary many of the experiments that Köhler conducted, and described in his book, feel. Unlike many of his peers, who were interested in how individual animals solved problems, Köhler noted the importance of understanding how the behaviour of one chimpanzee influenced another's actions. That's something I continue to observe and study through my own research into primate social learning.

One key ingredient to successful research

Collaboration, especially interdisciplinary collaboration, as it encourages you to look at your research questions and methods from a fresh perspective, which in turn helps to produce more interesting and rigorous research. Furthermore, collaboration with individuals or institutions outside of academia can be incredibly valuable, especially when trying to reach or influence and wider audience with your research.

One alternative career path you might have chosen

One of my favourite aspects of my job is writing, so I think one alternative career path that I might have pursued would be as a science reporter. I could spend my time communicating science to a wider audience, which is a passion of mine.

One mentor

My former postdoc adviser, Dr Sarah Brosnan, was an incredible mentor. She not only fostered my scientific skills and interests, but also shared insights into how to balance work and family life,

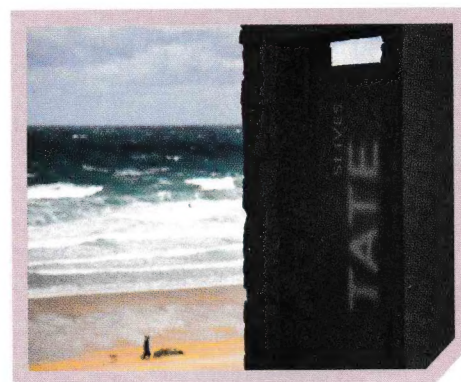
something that is not often actively explored.

One thing that you would change about psychology

The desire to gloss over variance in data. I study differences across species, but differences within species can be equally meaningful. No data set is perfect and that is interesting in its own right, especially when considering personality differences as an explanatory variable.

One cultural recommendation

With its views out over the sea and the glorious Cornish light pouring in through the



windows, Tate St. Ives is a lovely space in which to spend an afternoon.

One future goal for your research

To combine pure and applied research in every study that I run at Lincoln Park Zoo. I continually strive to conduct research that is academically interesting and that also helps inform how we can provide the best possible care for our primates – my personal goal for the future is to conduct research that can achieve both goals simultaneously.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

If used well, social media can be a wonderful forum to connect with researchers, hear about the latest research, and communicate with your wider community.

coming soon

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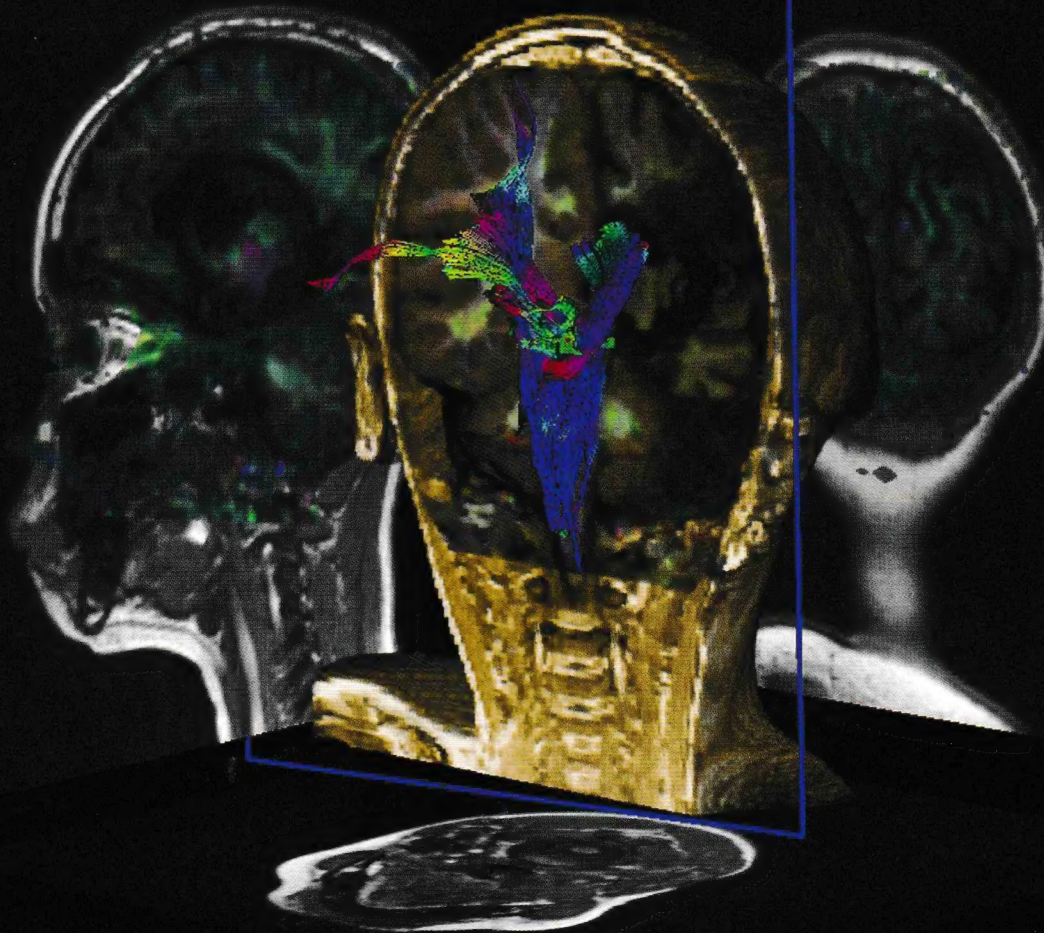
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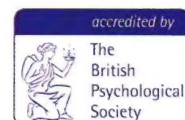


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